

The Northern Tyrant [Game of Thrones] Chapter 53 - Catelyn's Woes, Jorah's Folly, Song of the Road & Back To Ramsgate

Wylis woke up to the sensation of wet sandpaper being dragged on his face. When he opened his eyes, it turned out to be Caliburn's massive tongue.

He'd fallen asleep in Caliburn's clean stable the previous night. As the big horse lay down, he leaned against the horse's back and slept there. Now, Caliburn had turned on his belly and licked his face.

"Alright, alright, I'm awake now, boy. I ain't your foal." Wylis stirred and scratched Caliburn's face. "Sleep well?"

[Affirmative.]

"Hungry?"

[Famished.]

"Hah!" Wylis got up, feeling Caliburn's emotions as responses. He walked and tore open the best horse feed the North could afford. He'd brought it along on the journey in carts since he expected nothing great in Winterfell.

Finally, he splashed his face with water from the nearby tub and fixed his clothes.

"I'll fetch you some fruits and greens. Finish the feed until I return."

"Neighehe!" Caliburn bobbed his head and rammed his face into the manger.

Wylis laughed at the goofball and left. Though he couldn't stop cracking his neck muscles, as his sleeping posture wasn't the best last night.

I'm getting old. Wait, I'm just twenty-three.

Having lived two lives, although he was in his twenties in the last one as well, still impacted his mind to a degree. Having lived as Wylis since the age of fourteen in this body, his mind didn't reset but instead continued where his last life's age left off.

"Lord Kaiser. May I have a word in private?"

Wylis stopped walking and turned, finding Catelyn Stark of all people standing at the door of the Stark household stable. She was dressed in a hooded cloak over her noble gown. But she wore no hood; her auburn hair was made up in a simple bun.

Wylis passed her a smile, looking left and right. "Not the wisest road, seeking me out like this, my lady. The smallfolk do love their whispers."

Hm, so the charm works on her still. Don't know if the title effect applies to her. Wait, I got the genetic buff on Tully through Lysa as well.

Moreover, there was a quest reward that gave him a friendly status with House Tully. So in some ways, Catelyn should look at him positively. And by the shy smile on her face, he reckoned she was fond of him, not fearful.

How do I amplify it?

"This is my home, my lord. I have leave to go where I will. And there were private matters of importance to discuss. Such things are best kept from prying eyes and idle ears," Catelyn replied, her words barely above a whisper.

Wylis nodded, curious as to what she wanted to discuss. As far as he knew, there was nothing. But he hoped she would bring up Eddard's doubts. He first used Earthbending to sense his surroundings, however.

He couldn't sense that wide a radius in his boots. But he could feel Caliburn munching nearby, a few more horses in the other stable. The only humans nearby were he and Catelyn.

He simply walked into the nearest stable, not far inside, but just enough to be hidden from prying eyes. He allowed Catelyn inside as well and maintained a respectable distance.

"What important matter do you have, my lady?"

"My sister."

"..."

Uh, Lysa, you crazy woman. Couldn't keep your mouth shut.

He sighed and rubbed at his face wearily, praying Catelyn would hold her tongue. "She told you? Careful, walls have ears. Best speak in riddles."

Catelyn nodded, strangely acting nervous, her hands rubbing. "I... What are your intentions?"

Wylis frowned. He didn't want Catelyn to grow that seed of doubt as well. "I have no intentions, my lady. I was pursued by Lord Arryn himself. What I sought, I've already been granted. His aid gave my trade a foothold in King's Landing. What remains is an oath I mean to keep until the Gods take me. I'll guard Lady Arryn and her children, and see House Arryn stands unchallenged in the Vale."

"Children? How many?"

Wylis shrugged. "Who can count such things, my lady? Lord Arryn grows older by the day. Lady Arryn has but a few years left to raise herself a brood. In the end, the choice is hers."

He noticed her gaze was intensely focused on his face. He just offered her a smile in return.

"Why have you chosen to take Dacey with you, my lord? It sets you in dispute with House Mormont."

"I'm not taking her. The choice was hers. Her heart longs for a warrior's path, and neither I nor Ramsgate cares whether the hand upon the blade is a man's or a woman's. If she seeks to master the sword, I will allow it." He replied and stepped further inside the stable as he heard noise outside. He put a hand on Catelyn's shoulders and moved her as well.

With Catelyn against the wall, he settled close to her, enough that her lactating breasts brushed against him as she breathed. He placed an arm against the wooden wall beside her face while pressing the other finger on her lips, silencing her.

He didn't need to do that, but he still did. He could already see the signs; she found him attractive. And now, as she blushed, it was all but confirmed. But he didn't want to risk it all; now wasn't the time to kiss her. She would never allow him.

Finally, when he felt the footsteps leaving, he pulled away from the gorgeous redhead. "My apologies, my lady. There were men outside. Now, for your sister, or Dacey, I am no villain. I hold dear every woman in my life, whether friend or lover. I love all my children, and I would march to war for each of them. I bear ill will toward no one, save the Boltons. And the Starks are kin to me in more ways than you can imagine.

"The North is rich in land, but poor in fields worth sowing. I have no wish to chase barren acres, my lady. My efforts are set on trade, on building my city, and readying Ramsgate for the long winters ahead. With time, it'll become a thriving harbor for eastern trade."

For a long time, Catelyn was silent, watching his face as if eager to find honesty.

Wylis didn't smile this time, giving her the solemn look the situation deserved.

"My husband... mistrusts you, Lord Kaiser."

Wylis acted shocked and backed up slightly. "I could feel it. But I don't understand why? We fought like brothers. Not once have I harmed Winterfell or Starks."

"I know not, my lord. He questions why Lord Rickard never took you into his household. He wonders at your intentions for the Hornwood lands, and what scheme compels you to bring so many people to Ramsgate. And I... cannot say his worries are without cause.

"The realm has never known a man such as you, my lord. Noble houses are built upon old custom, ancient blood, and the patient turning of time. Yet you climbed so far, and so quickly, that... your presence leaves many unsettled and confused."

Wylis listened to her words carefully. While he didn't consider Catelyn to be smart or wise, he was aware that she knew enough to sound sensible. And the woman had what he did not, a connection to a house with a long history. Hence, her understanding of nobility was in ways greater than his.

He knew more about Earth's nobles, but Westeros was different in some ways. Such as each region having a principal noble house, which was more like a princely house but without royal titles. And yet, they weren't independent and came under the Iron Throne. The power distribution was slightly different in this world.

One could argue that Tullys, Starks, Arryns, Tyrells, and Lannisters were still kings of their respective kingdoms, but held no royal titles or decrees. Dorne and the Iron Islands, their situation wasn't simple either.

"Are you not risking treason by speaking of this, my lady? The mind of Lord Stark ought to remain his own," he asked back.

Catelyn smiled softly, raising a hand to rest her palm against his chest. "I remember my wedding night with fondness, and what you did for me then. You are a good man, Lord Kaiser. While I can't wholly understand the source of my husband's doubts, I can see why such thoughts trouble him. I only hope you may ease his fears, and be wary of the other houses. You are new to them, and they will see an upstart before they see the man. They may dine with you and offer smiles, but in their hearts, they will still see an outsider, beneath their standing."

Ah, so it was a hopeful warning.

"Aye, the Freys made that plain to me some time ago," he said, glancing toward the door. "Soon, my lady, I will begin a land survey across the North. Years ago, I found gold in the Westerlands, and I offered the whereabouts to the Lannisters, but Lord Tywin refused my terms. So I know this work well enough. If I find something in the Stark lands, I shall offer fair terms. I hope Lord Stark will take it for honesty, not some merchant's trick."

It was the simple trick of winning another's mind. Overload their mind with something overwhelmingly complex and interesting. He wanted Catelyn to anticipate his land survey. And the mention of gold was like a tiny spark of greedy hope. What if Stark lands also hides gold? What if... so many what ifs.

For a woman like Catelyn, who came from a financially more successful house like House Tully, Winterfell wasn't the place of her dreams. So, hope for better days was easy to take root.

"Let us return now, before someone comes looking for you, Lady Stark." Wylis walked to the door.

"Thank you, my lord."

He halted and looked behind. "For what?"

"For listening to me."

"I don't see why that merits gratitude."

Catelyn gave a soft laugh. "My lord, that is a thing peculiar to the North. Here, women are not wholly ignored nor made powerless. In the South... to be heard at all is often treated as though one were defying the Stranger himself."

Wylis thought for a moment and agreed with it. In the end, he just gave her a respectful nod and walked out. He had to get fruits and veggies before Caliburn could start throwing tantrums.

He walked towards the main keep to visit the kitchens. It felt great not having to sneak around the castle anymore. The last time he was in the castle, he was still a stableboy. Back then, the servants of the castle didn't like him for his sneaky behavior.

But now, they bowed their heads to him.

He passed by the outer courtyard and headed to the castle's entrance.

"Stop right there! You!"

Huh?

Wylis was a bit shocked. The last time someone dared to shout towards him was a bunch of Bolton spies, whom he butchered later. He turned to see who this brave man was and... frowned hard.

"Lord Mormont, you need something?" He asked, eyeing Jorah from head to toe. Disheveled hair, wobbly feet, crumbled clothes.

"You... I won't let you-uh... Some piss-proud upstart... Who d'you think you are?! Dacey is a Mormont, not your whore."

Wylis walked closer to the so-called Lord of Bear Island. He towered over him, peering down. "You've the stench of wine."

"You don't belong here... y'hear me? First you crawled t'the Starks, then t'the King. Groveling all the way t'knighthood and lordship. Nev'r errned... a bloody thing! Dacey's not going with you. I swore t'my father I wo—"

Pa!

Wylis slapped Jorah on the face, hard enough that the lip tore and bled. "If you have complaints, then fight like a man. Don't bitch like some sour maiden."

A crowd had started to gather. Catelyn had also arrived there; the servants and some guards of the castle watched from the sides.

Jorah spat blood and glared, drawing his sword. “N-not five years gone since y’ took th’ lordship. Gods... look at that rot—en arrogance. M’house stood for centuries. Proud blood. Fought wars beside King Torrhen, we did, and now... now you! You, yesterday born—”

"Brother! Enough!" Dacey arrived just then, furious, her own sword unsheathed. "It is my choice to ride with Lord Kaiser. I mean to be a warrior, and that road is mine to take."

"Warrior? Hah! Why, women on Bear Island are warriors. We've fought th' Ironborn alongside 'em..."

"No! What we have on Bear Island are broodmares allowed the rare use of steel. Don't be so taken by history, brother. It means little when blades meet. If they did, King Aerys would not have fallen to Lord Kaiser's strike."

That's right, girl. Tell him.

"Hah!" Jorah gave a scornful laugh. "You think he'll see you fitted for a knight's spurs?"

"..."

Jorah frowned when Dacey remained silent. "Don't... Don't be a bloody fool, Dacey. You're a woman. Doesn't matter what y' do, y'll neVERRR be a knight."

"Says who?" Wylis shoved Dacey gently aside and stepped before her. "Your mind is smaller than I feared, Jorah. Aye, no woman has worn a knight's spurs before. Dacey shall be the first."

"You fill her head with false dreams! You're jus' as rotten as I expected! A lying, scheming... horseshit-shov—"

Scrrr!

Wylis finally drew his massive sword from his back and slapped its flat blade between Jorah's legs, on his balls. "If a cock alone earns a man his knighthood, then let us put it to the sword. I'll carve yours off and see whether you can still lift a blade. Gregor Clegane fought well enough after, so a cock can hardly be essential."

"Haaaaa!"

Jorah tried to swing at Wylis.

Clank!

Wylis intercepted the incoming slash and slapped Jorah's blade away with his hand.

Bam!

At the same time, he swung his six-foot steel and smacked its flat side on Jorah's shoulder, knocking him onto the ground.

“Aye, I’ve no ancient line behind me. No proud name carried on banners. I earned every scar, every title, every scrap of honor with blood on my hands and mud beneath my boots. You mock not me, but every smallfolk soul that dares dream beyond their station. I proved to the realm that a man need not be born great to rise. If you cannot see that, then I pity Bear Island.”

Finally, Wylis crouched beside Jorah, his right fist raised.

“When you wake, you’ll beg pardon for this. You’ll name it drunken rambling. Yet wine has a cruel habit of loosening the honest tongue. Tonight, you poured your rot before me, every foul thought nesting in that skull of yours. I would have you remember it come morning, so let me leave my mark.”

Wylis grabbed Jorah’s collar, lifted his head, and smashed a punch on his left eye.

Bam!

Hard and precise, he knocked the man out and also gifted him a blue eye.

No wonder you got exiled. A damn rotten seed from the very beginning.

Finally, Wylis got up, sheathed his sword, and turned his head to look upwards to the side, where the wooden bridge connected the inner keep to the outer. There, he noticed Eddard standing alone, just watching.

Wylis said nothing and looked at Catelyn instead. “Seems I have overstayed my welcome. I’ll be departing come morning.”

He looked at Dacey then.

“Write to Bear Island. Tell them every word Jorah said to me. I’ll not have his vile tongue breeding misunderstandings between our two houses.”

Dacey just nodded, not even bothering to help Jorah up. It was some Winterfell guards who helped the Mormont lord up and took him inside.

#####

Just as Wylis had declared, he left Winterfell the very next morning after breaking the fast.

With him was his entire family and Lady Lyarra Stark, who had personally made the choice to travel, not leaving it up to Eddard. There were enough horses and spring suspension carriages for all of them. He’d brought along four of them already, alongside a few roofed carts for cargo, and extra horses, since he never planned to ask for any from Lord Stark.

Wylis rode at the front with Dacey riding right beside him. Behind was Benjen, and the male members of his family. It was a boring journey, and since two old women were traveling with them, they had to go slowly.

They crossed the White Knife and took the less busy road down the Hornwood lands. It took them three days just to reach that far. Each night, they made camp in some village or in an open field.

Wylis kept himself from 'sparring' with Dacey during those nights. Though they stole a few moments here and there to touch each other. The rest of the time, he spent with his family, Old Nan, and got to know Lyarra Stark better.

The woman was old now, with wrinkles on her face, though in a far better state than Old Nan. He could see the evidence of the beauty she once was, and the resemblance to Lyanna.

There wasn't much to know about Lyarra Stark. The woman wasn't interesting, and as the Lady of Winterfell, she played a very docile role as the simple wife of Rickard Stark. Though Wylis did get to learn that Lyanna was the result of incest. Turns out, Lyarra Stark was Rickard's first cousin, once removed, which meant she was from Rickard's parents' generation.

Well, my seed's going to fix years of incest then.

On the fourth day, Wylis had Magnus riding with him, as the boy sat in front of him on Caliburn's mighty neck, using his little hands to braid the mane while talking, not with Wylis but with the horse.

Often, Caliburn responded by braying, big huffs, or nodding of the head. Already, Wylis had learned that Caliburn's favorite color was some shade of red, his favorite fruit was an apple, and his favorite human was Wylis himself.

"D-Does..." Dacey speechlessly muttered from her horse. "Does it... understand us?"

"Aye, Caliburn's an intelligent boy. Probably the strongest and fastest horse in Westeros. I'll soon be getting quality mares to start a new line of horses with him."

"I don't believe you, my lord."

Wylis took that challenge. "Caliburn, if you understand me, flap your tongue out towards this fine beauty."

"Pffffffft!"

Caliburn did just that.

"..."

Dacey's jaw fell.

"If you understand me, scare her with a fake bite."

Right away, Caliburn stepped closer to Dacey's horse, eyes full of intelligent mischief, and then, he showed all his teeth. Dacey yelped when Caliburn launched his open maw on her thigh. But he never bit and moved away before Dacey's horse got spooked.

"H... How?!" Dacey exclaimed. "How did this happen?"

Wylis shrugged, watching Magnus hugging Caliburn's neck. "No idea. We bonded well. He's been with me since the tourney. Marched through war and all the rot between with me. I suppose we both grew together."

But then, all of a sudden, Wylis was hit with a bored inspiration. He remembered a song from his old life. Those memories were rarely used now as he'd gotten used to this new life. But it was never forgotten.

"Cali, how about I sing you a song, boy?"

"Neighehe!"

"Alright." Wylis chuckled, but found the lack of a guitar annoying. "On the first part of the journey, I was..."

He began singing, trying his best to sound like the original singer, but his voice was naturally deep. And a whole year of shouting during the rebellion in his growing years had made it deeper.

"The first thing I met was a fly with a buzz... I've been through the desert on a horse with no name."

Signing that, Wylis looked forward to his upcoming southern visit. Caliburn was going to be with him, and they would pass through Westerlands, the grassy Reach, and parts of dry Dorne. The song really fit the theme of his and Caliburn's next adventure.

"Neighehe!"

"I know, I know, you got a name." Wylis patted the fur head and continued. "'Cause there ain't no one for to give you no pain... la, la..."

At that point, Wylis smacked Magnus on the head lightly, urging him to sing along. So, the father and son soon mixed their voices. Since Magnus didn't know the lyrics, the boy clapped in rhythm during those parts and only sang during the predictable la-la part.

"And the story it told of a river that flowed... You see I've been..."

At that moment, it seemed even Caliburn was enjoying it, as the big, bulky horse started to trot, clapping his hooves on the dirt but without picking up speed. That almost made it seem Caliburn was dancing.

Wylis laughed, grabbed Magnus, and settled the boy on his shoulders. The young boy cried in joy and sang along.

That whole scene was watched. Not just by his family, but also the guards of Ramsgate, and the heads that poked out of the carriage windows. Dacey was the closest and smiling dumbly with a flicker of happy tears in her eyes, like there was no evil in the world, and that life was good.

Perhaps that was what everyone felt watching Wylis, Magnus, and Caliburn goof around together.

It was hard to see that and imagine a tyrannical warrior undisputed in battle.

Even harder to imagine the legends the little boy on the shoulders would write for himself.

Clop! Clop! Clop!

"La... laaaa..." Magnus sang.

"After nine days, I let the horse run free..."

And the song continued.

#####

As Ramsgate neared, Wylis moved from the front of the entourage to the back and let the carriages enter the growing town. The gates in the wall had already been installed, and a team of guards manned them.

Wylis remained behind, however. He picked three men to stay behind with him and Dacey and let everyone else go. He'd already ordered Benjen on what to do. And the women in the castle already knew where they needed to hide for a time.

Once everyone was gone, Wylis slowed his horse, still outside Ramsgate's city walls. He got off the horse on the side of the dirt road by the trees. Everyone followed him and did the same. From there, he ordered the three soldiers to stand guard while he took Darcy through the tree lines a distance away so none could hear them.

"Dacey, before I bring you within my walls, there are things you must know. An oath you must swear." Wylis firmly said, stopping by a large tree and turning to face her. "There are secrets here I would guard with my life."

"And I will guard them with you."

"But you know they are only words," Wylis said. "The women within that castle, aye, some share my bed, and I keep them hidden. My own wife among them. For if the realm learns of them, there will be war. And I shall win it, whatever the cost, no matter how many must fall for it, friend or foe."

Those were enough hints, Wylis believed. There were only a few women in the realm who could cause a war. And Dacey was smart enough to make a few guesses.

"Are any of them... wicked?"

"No, each of them was a bird trapped in a cruel world not of their choosing. Cast into roles they did not choose for themselves. They would have died wretched deaths had I not taken them in and given them my care. Now, I love them, and I will do unspeakable things to anyone who hurts them. So you must swear an oath, not only as my squire, but as keeper of my secrets. Whatever you see, hear, or learn within these walls must follow you to the grave."

Dacey stared at him for a while.

Wylis was sure she was going to take it. But he was curious about what she was thinking.

Thud!

Dacey took to one knee, staring at him. "Do I also count as a caged bird, my lord?"

"Not now. But I've a good feeling about you. Stay close through battle and blood, and I can see you earning a place in here." Wylis tapped on his chest.

"I swear by the Old Gods and the New. I, Dacey Mormont, will be your faithful shield, care for your steel, obey your voice above all others, and hold your secrets with my life. This, I swear."

Wylis held her by the shoulders and pulled her up. "Then let's introduce you to my wife and the others. My children will adore you."

He walked out of the treeline and got on his horse again. He rode fast into the growing city, and the guards above opened the gates themselves. He surveyed the surroundings as he rode, eyeing all the construction.

The foundation of the future city hall was being worked on. A few temporary wooden shacks had also been built for the workers to live in. At the same time, he could see on the far north side a large construction zone. A lot of homes were being built there, permanent structures.

"Lord Kaiser!"

As he rode slowly, the people of Ramsgate gathered at the side of the roads to greet him. All of them waved, smiling, albeit covered in dirt. But he paid them well, and they got to eat real meals. He was keeping his word.

"My lord! My lord!"

But just then, Wylis saw a boy running along the roadside, matching his pace. Unlike others who waved and cheered, smiling, the boy was only frowning.

"My lord! Force is mass times acceleration! How do I find mass?"

Huh? What?

Wylis pulled in the reins and halted Caliburn to get a better look at the boy. Never in his life had he imagined being asked such a question randomly in his pre-industrial, sort-of slum-like fief. By a kid of all people.

"Where did you learn about Force?" Wylis asked.

"I... My lord, I came to Ramsgate a week ago from King's Landing. They told me I got a good head for study, and I learned it from them books you wrote, my lord. How do you work out mass? The book says weight divided by gravity. What's that, my lord? What's gravity?"

Wylis scratched his head, a deep frown on his face. The books he remembered writing were in a strict order, so nobody got confused. And that was when it struck him.

"Boy, you've been sneaking through books far above your station, haven't you? You never learned the gravity part." Wylis called him out, and by the boy's reaction, he was right. "What's your name?"

The boy dared not look up at him. "I... I'm Bolga, my lord."

The fact that the boy called him 'my lord' and not 'm'lord' told him enough. "What did you do in King's Landing?"

"I-I worked in my father's tavern in Flea Bottom and... and wrote letters for sailors at the docks. I... forgive me, m—"

"What's the height of a right-angled triangle where the base is three centimeters, and the hypotenuse is five centimeters?" Wylis asked off the top of his head.

"Four! Four, my lord!"

"..."

Jackpot!

That was enough for Wylis. For someone to do that much mental calculation in that sort of world after a life in Flea Bottom proved their immense learning speed.

"Gravity is the force that keeps us on the land. I calculated it using my clock and a pendulum," Wylis replied and looked at a soldier behind him. "Take Bolga to the garrison. See that he is fed and tended well. And send for Qyburn to test his wits."

"Aye, my lord."

Wylis continued his journey to the castle while answering Dacey's questions about what had just happened. As expected, she couldn't understand what Force was, what Mass was, or gravity. He just patted her leg on the horse and shook his head.

"Keep to the swords, my squire. And steel yourself for Chett. He's far better with a blade than you. Best not let him knock you flat before supper."

"I'm grateful for this gift of tension, my lord."

Wylis laughed and nudged Caliburn to ride faster.

A short ride later, he finally entered the castle. He walked through the main gate with Dacey at his side.

"My lord."

"Chett." Wylis hugged his squire. "This is Dacey, my second squire. Teach her well."

He didn't bother watching the fierce staring contest between the two behind him as he continued into the castle. He soon heard voices from the larger living hall with seats for guests.

As he entered, he saw everyone seated, and only Anna was standing nearby. Once again, she was introduced as his wife because Lyanna couldn't be introduced to them all. In her arms was Magnus, sleeping soundly. At that point, Wylis reckoned the boy could be sleeping on hard stone and still look comfortable.

"It's a magnificent castle, Wylis," said Jarak, his grandfather.

"It only seems so, I fear. She was built as a fortress, with walls thick enough to shame a castle keep, and so there are fewer chambers within. I would gladly keep you all here forever, yet apart from Lady Lyarra and Old Nan, the rest must stay in the mansion I've prepared just beyond, in the inner ring. In time, it will be the heart of Ramsgate, the city's chief district, where Ramsgate's finest halls and most important folk will dwell."

Wylis knew he was rambling, but he hoped to get the point across. He didn't want to take more risks than he was already taking. For now, he only wanted Old Nan and Lady Lyarra to know the truth. His mother and father could wait.

"Long as I get to meet me grandson, I'll live in a damn stable if I need to." Garteh, Wylis' father declared.

Wylis chuckled. "Come now, Father. I said make it feel like home, not turn it into Winterfell. No stable dwelling anymore, however charming Caliburn may be."

They laughed, and Wylis sat down with them, pulling Anna beside. The poor woman was so nervous that he could see it on her face. So he put an arm around her shoulder and kept her snug at his side.

Soon enough, supper was served in the smaller dining hall. After that, he led all but Old Nan and Lady Lyarra out.

It was just outside the moat's gate, into the future administration district. Just beside the moat's gate was a large, lavish house, which was mostly finished but still needed work on the upper floor's roof. It was a square-shaped classical Roman-style house with a courtyard in the middle of it. It had enough rooms for all his family to live, and even host guests. And it was the closest to his castle.

"There are eight servants to keep the mansion in order and attend to your comforts. Three maids serve in the kitchens. Please, treat them gently. They are Ramsgate folk, and I see them as my own kin, as my brothers and sisters, sons and daughters," Wylis warmly warned them. A sudden taste of wealth could turn decent people cruel if left unchecked. He wanted no part of that.

"Then they're our sons and daughters too," his grandfather declared, nodding at the lineup of servants.

Wylis showed each of them their rooms after that. They were decorated with curtains on windows, carpets, large canopy beds, mirrors, art pieces, and came with toilets connected to working sewers, which was a new concept. There was no in-house plumbing, however. But Wylis had left space to install them in the future.

His grandaunts weren't that old, still in their late thirties, so he told them to maybe seek a husband since now they had free time. As for his uncles, he had plans for them. They were great hunters and experienced in managing men.

After bidding them a good night, he finally walked back to the castle. He was truly tired already and wanted a bath in the spring. But first, he knew there was one monumental task remaining.

Ting!

Right as he walked on the moat's bridge, a chime rang in his head. The blue screen appeared.

[Side Quest Completed - Shame Of The Tyrant

Description - A Tyrant does not leave family behind, for they can be a source of strength. Yet you never gave them the chance.

Goal - Right what was wrong. Make the House Kaiser whole.

Reward - Family Finder: No matter where, know the general direction of those who share your name and blood.]

Oh? That's fucking sweet! Sweeter than sweet.

While it wasn't the exact location, even knowing the general direction felt like a great boon. If anything, it would allow him to know all his family was safe in Ramsgate during his travels.

His mood fresh now, he walked back inside the living hall. Old Nan, Lady Lyarra, and Anna sat there. Chett and Darcey were standing at the side, and Benjen was seated elsewhere.

"Bring her," he ordered Chett.

"Old Nan, my lady. There is a truth I must lay bare." Wylis began, pressing a kiss to Anna's brow. "I love Anna. Yet she is not the Lady of Ramsgate. I spoke false, for the fewer souls who know, the safer she remains. Should the realm learn my wife's true name and face, I fear it may stir another war, another rebellion."

Footsteps came from the door right then. Brandon appeared in the view, grinning. "Mother! You've grown fat. Don't walk as I told you to, do you?"

This man. None can hold his tongue.

"Haul your arse over here, Wylis. Show your wife yourself, I'm done playing bloody nursemaid. She near drove me mad, beat me at chess ten damn times. Gods, I'm thick as a sack of rocks."

Wylis laughed and moved, letting Brandon step aside. He was still blocking the view of the hall and looked at his gorgeous wife first. She was dressed in a blue, royal gown with a pale gray, almost white fur-collared cloak. Her hair was braided, and her face was...

He just pecked her lips, took her hand in his, and turned.

He pulled her into the hall to stand beside him. However, he noticed Lyanna staring at Dacey first instead of her mother.

Ah, sniffed out the competition right away? Must be the wolf nose.

Wylis moved closer to the settee where Old Nan and Lady Lyarra sat, gobsmacked. In moments, Anna handed sleeping Magnus over to Lyanna, and Wylis put an arm around her waist, presenting themselves as the family they were.

"L-Lyanna?!" Lady Lyarra exclaimed, her breath restless, her old knees somehow filled with vigour as she rushed to her feet. "I-Is that you?"

Lyanna was all tears, bobbing her head nonstop.

"It's me... It's Lyanna, mother."

A/N: Next chap's gonna have a few months-long timeskip.