

The castle of Summerhall burned behind her, making Daenerys a bit uncomfortable standing so close to the old seat of her family. Black smoke bellowed out into the sky as dragon flame continued to eat into the stones and bricks of the castle. The sky was darkened by the black smoke rising out of the castle while the screams of men haunted the air.

Drogon and Rhaegal had burned through all the defences and tents of the Golden Company, leaving a broken army without any leadership in its wake, starving and without the necessary medical supplies to treat the injured. Under such gruelling circumstances, the Knights of the Vale attacked the broken remains of the Golden Company, delivering the final blow that finished off the sellsword company for good.

There were few who survived the attack from their dragons and the army. And those who survived were not long for this world.

“Please, your grace. Mercy...mercy, your grace. Merc....Ahhhhwhuuck...”

Daenerys flinched as her husband drove Lightbringer straight through the heart of a sellsword begging for his life. She watched as Daeron pulled his sword out, its shiny blade drenched in dark red blood. Not a shred of mercy could be found in the eyes of her beloved, who was now cleaning the blood away from the sword using the dead man’s cloak.

“I warned you it’d be a gory sight to behold.” said Daeron, his smooth voice cutting through her trance.

“I’ve been in a war before.” said Daenerys, remembering a time she had sought to forget when she was travelling with the Dothraki horde and her many battles against the Free Cities.

“You’ve not seen me fight in wars before, my love. Perhaps, it’s not best for you to be here. I’d rather not tarnish your eyes with the violence I commit with the sword.” said Daeron.

“We are fighting this war not just for our reign but for the future of House Targaryen. Should the Golden Company survive, more Blackfyres will be created by our enemies to destabilise the reign of our house. So, trust me, my love. I know brutality is necessary so that the Blackfyre threat ends here.”

Daeron eyed her for a moment before letting the matter drop.

Daenerys was relieved that her husband was not pursuing the squeamishness she displayed. She was aware that the deaths on this battlefield would mean fewer battles in the future. That doesn’t mean she was easy to watch her husband walk knee-deep in the blood of her enemies. Burning down

hundreds of men from atop a dragon was far simpler than surrounding herself in the butchery that was happening outside the burning walls of Summerhall.

Her eyes again fell on the burning castle that holds great historical significance for her family. According to Ser Barristan, her eldest brother had been born in this place, while many King Aegon V and Prince Duncan Targaryen lost their lives to the fire at Summerhall.

“Daeron.” Dany whispered, her shoulder rubbing with her husband taking his hand into her own, pausing in their steps.

“Yes, love?”

“Summerhall was said to be the most beautiful castle in Westeros. I’d like to see this place restored in our time.” Dany said to Daeron.

“Hmm.” Daeron hummed thoughtfully, eyeing the burning ruins of the castle. “I suppose we could restore Summerhall and use it as the seat of power through which we control the Stormlords. Restoring to its former glory will be expensive, though.”

“I’m sure the mines of Westerlands have enough gold to make Summerhall a hundred times over.” Daenerys said coyly, batting her eyelashes at her husband.

Daeron laughed, putting his arms around her shoulder and pulling her against his body. Their plated armour grazed when they walked together, partially hugging each other.

“We should remove our armours.” said Daenerys, disliking the weight and the heavy metal keeping her away from enjoying the warmth of her husband’s body.

“I think not. We are still on a battlefield. All it takes is a stray arrow or a dagger in the shadows to end our lives. My love, we might be dragon riders, but we are not invulnerable.” said Daeron.

“Still, I dislike this attire of steel.” said Daenerys, her gloved hand tracing the smooth surface of her husband’s armour.

With bright yellow flames burning around them, her husband’s shiny silver armour looked like it was made of bronze.

“Then I’ll be sure to take great pleasure in stripping every piece of steel on your body in our tent, my love.” Daeron growled lowly into her ear, making her shiver.

“Only the steel?” she asked innocently.

Before her husband could reply, they were interrupted by a pair of Vale knights.

“Your grace. We’ve captured two men trying to flee south towards the Dornish border.”

“Why are you bothering me with some unknown sellswords getting captured? My orders were clear. We take no prisoners.” Daeron said coldly, making the Vale knights audibly gulp at the dangerous glint in Daeron’s eyes.

“Your grace. One is Jon Connington, and we suspect the other is the false dragon.”

Daenerys exchanged a look with Daeron.

“Take us to them.” Daenerys ordered.

The two knights led them to their temporary campsite, where the two prisoners were held down on their knees with their arms tied behind their backs with ropes.

“Is it them?” Daenerys asked as she took in the two men.

“Yes.” Daeron muttered to her as they moved closer to the prisoners.

One was a red-haired man with a greying beard and blue eyes holding nothing but loathing. The other was a silver-haired man looking at them fearfully with lilac eyes.

“Jon Connington. The man who brought down Storm’s End and invaded my lands with the aid of the Golden Company. I suppose I should congratulate you on delivering a temporary victory to this band of loser sellswords in this long bloody war between the red and black dragons. I’m sure Maesters would mention your name in their books for accomplishing such a feat.” Daeron said candidly, looking relatively relaxed despite the hateful stare Connington was directing at them.

“You... you destroyed your brother’s legacy. You’d side with this bastard over your trueborn nephew.” Jon Connington spat at Daenerys’ feet.

“You can claim the sun rises in the west again and again and convince yourself of that lie. But the sun would always rise in the east no matter your conviction in the lie you have repeated to yourself.” said Daeron, unsheathing Lightbringer from his waist.

Daenerys didn’t blink as Daeron stabbed Lightbringer straight through Jon Connington’s throat. With a squelching sound, Connington fell back as Daeron pulled back Lightbringer. Connington gasped and gurgled on the ground, drowning in his own blood.

“I demand a trial by combat.” The false dragon stuttered out.

For a moment, Daenerys worried that her husband would entertain that demand. After all, men can be prickly regarding their pride and skill with a sword.

“I’m sure you thought yourself quite brilliant with that move. Unfortunately for you, I’m not here to play at war, nor have I put you on trial. I’m here to kill all my enemies.” Daeron said sardonically before a swing of his sword relieved the false dragon of his head.

Daenerys stared at the severed head that lay on the floor with a horrified expression plastered on the boyish young face of the last Blackfyre. She felt a twinge of sympathy for her enemy as Aegon had honestly believed he was her nephew. She wondered how many sons, brothers and fathers lost their lives all because of a lie.

“Hopefully, this is the true end for House Blackfyre.” Daenerys muttered.

“Do not fret, my love. The Blackfyre line is dead.” said Daeron, kissing her forehead. “And with it, we have secured the Iron Throne from the threat of Daemon Blackfyre’s progeny.”

“So, what next?” Daenerys asked after a moment of silence, watching the men drag the corpse away on her husband’s orders. “Are we going to put down the Dornish?”

“No. Princess Arianne has sent forth an army to put down the rebellion of Gerold Dayne and other defiant Dornish lords. Let the Dornish fight each other to the death. We’ll deal with whoever emerges victorious in this tussle.” said Daeron.

“I thought you were supporting Gerold Dayne?” Daenerys asked confusedly.

“And I’ll continue to help him by supplying grain and weapons using the Reach lords. But I won’t be fighting his battles.” said Daeron. “After all, we have many other battles to fight and enemies to kill. Let the desert dwellers settle their grievances in the desert.”

“So, to Highgarden then?” Daenerys asked, raising her head from her husband’s shoulder to look at the smiling face of Daeron.

“Indeed. I think we’ve made Lady Olenna wait long enough.”

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Olenna Tyrell disliked the position her family was currently in. Her family was in deep trouble, and no one knew the depth of the crisis better than her. The very existence of House Tyrell was at stake with the latest actions of the Targaryen king. Her grandson Garlan and granddaughter Margaery were hostages in the Red Keep despite House Tyrell’s services in defeating the Lannister army. And most of all, Cersei’s last bastard boy remained alive, meaning her granddaughter remained the wife of Tommen. That was quite dangerous for the prospects of Margaery. Not a day went by when she did not pray for the death of Tommen, Cersei and Jaime. The longer they stayed alive, the worse it became for House Tyrell.

She had always known Targaryens were unpredictable and temperamental beasts. After all, she was nearly married off to one in her youth.

But she did not think the current Targaryen king would turn against her family in this manner, especially when all the kingdoms were in shambles. She was sure House Targaryen would prioritise restoring normalcy in the Seven Kingdoms. Instead, they used the chaos to tighten their claws into all the kingdoms. The Reach just happened to be the latest focus of the House of the Dragon as they had already dismantled the Riverlands and the Vale.

The North was already under Daeron Targaryen's control, and House Stark was merely a puppet. The Riverlands would never be the same with the Freys, and Brackens killed off and their lands attained. House Tully was now little better than a knightly house with their lord, lady and heir imprisoned in their own castle. The Vale was in turmoil as Lysa Tully's trysts weakened House Arryn, making them a laughingstock in Westeros.

'Now, the dragon sets its greedy eyes on the Reach and the Westerlands.' Olenna thought.

The sad fact was that she couldn't do a thing to withstand what was coming. There were no more moves left for her to play in this Game of Thrones. There was now a powerful king sitting on the Iron Throne who detested all the players in the great game. This was a king willing to use excessive force as much as he wanted to enforce his authority on the Seven Kingdoms. She felt like the mere notion of such a powerful king on the throne stifled her lungs, making breathing difficult. She wondered whether this was how the lords of Westeros felt during the reign of Targaryen kings when they had dragons aplenty in the skies.

Olenna looked out the window of her chambers and saw a sea of fluttering dragon banners in her castle. All the banners of House Tyrell were torn down once Ser Edwyn Manderly took charge of the castle. A small portion of the Targaryen army was camping outside the walls of Highgarden while most troops were inside. Some of her advisors had suggested not to open the gates of Highgarden for the Targaryen army when it marched along the Roseroad and demanded entrance. She had discarded any advice that'd pit her against King Daeron Targaryen. The young king had culled the entire Frey line overnight without any shred of mercy. She'd not annoy a man like that without knowing there was a way to bring him down.

Unfortunately, she had nothing in her arsenal to bring down a dragon.

She had lost the game, and to preserve the rest of her family, she asked Willas to open the gates. Thankfully, Highgarden was not sacked, and Ser Edwyn merely took charge of the castle with all of House Tyrell's knights and allies getting disarmed. There was nothing much to do other than wait for the intentions of Daeron Targaryen to be made clear. But, by the looks of it, she had an inkling of what the dragons were planning. She hoped her granddaughter and grandson managed to worm their way into the good graces of the Targaryen king and avert what she feared from happening.

A knock on the door of her chambers broke Olenna out of her musings.

“Come in.”

The door swung open to show it was Maester Gormon Tyrell and Maester Lomys. Both were sporting grim and grave faces as they closed the door behind them.

“I take it there is more unfavourable news for you two to share.” Olenna sighed.

“I’m afraid so, my lady.” Maester Lomys said grimly.

Olenna pursed her lips before closing her eyes and letting out a tired sigh.

“Well, out with it then.” Olenna snapped in frustration, tiring of the uncomfortable silence that pervaded her chambers.

“We received word of the Blackfyre boy and the Golden Company. King Daeron and Queen Daenerys flew their dragons and burned them down at Summerhall. Those who survived the dragons have scattered in four directions for safety while thousands lay in ashes at Summerhall.” Gormon Tyrell said anxiously.

“And the Blackfyre boy? Did he survive?” Olenna asked, fear setting in at the prospect of another enemy of House Targaryen getting knocked off the board.

“We don’t know, my lady. It’s possible the pretender escaped, but without Dorne supporting him, the chances are slim for the Blackfyre boy to survive long. The black dragon would find no shortage of men from the Wall to Dorne, hoping to gain the favour of King Daeron.” said Maester Lomys.

“And what better way is there to gain royal favour other than capturing the false dragon alive in the name of King Daeron?” Gormon said morosely.

Olenna pursed her lips as she contemplated her position. If she could’ve somehow influenced the outcome, she’d have ensured the Blackfyre boy’s survival to keep the dragons distracted until finally, she could present the black dragon on a silver platter earning the gratitude of the King and the Queen. Unfortunately, she neither had the resources to pull off a plan like that nor had any competent men in her service. All her trusted knights and servants were under house arrest or,

worse, dead at the hands of that accursed Manderly knight. After they surrendered along with Garlan, most of the Tyrell army was now fighting under the Targaryen banner.

“Did you hear anything from the Manderly knight?” Olenna asked the Maester.

“I’m afraid not, my lady. In our talks, Ser Edwyn refused to allude to any plans the Targaryens have for Highgarden.” Maester Lomys said with an apologetic look.

“What about the Faith, Gormon? Have you conveyed our fears to the Starry Sept?” Olenna asked.

“I’m afraid the Starry Sept remains undecided on how to move forward. The radical Sparrows have dealt a great blow to the Faith in the Crownlands. The men of the Faith are not exactly welcomed with open arms in the Crownlands or by the Targaryens.” said Gormon with a frown.

There seems to be some exchange of communication between the Starry Sept and the Crown. What was said between the Crown and the Faith remains unknown, and the Hightowers remained tight-lipped even if they knew something. She supposed they had learned their lesson not to meddle in the affairs of House Targaryen after the disastrous Targaryen civil war. Olenna wished she could do the same and pretend the Targaryens did not exist. Unfortunately, the dragons were holding her granddaughter and grandson hostage, making it impossible for her not to care.

A loud screech drew her attention to the sky, her bones chilling in fright as she realised what was coming. She didn’t have to wait long as a gigantic black dragon emerged from the clouds, its massive wings spanning far and wide enough to blot out the sun.

“The Seven save me.” Gormon breathed out, staring at the massive beast in the sky.

Soon, another dragon emerged out of the clouds, this one with gleaming green scales, looking more sleek but just as dangerous as the black dragon. The two dragons circled the castle, letting out bone-rattling roars that scared everyone to run for their lives. The powerful flaps of the dragons' wings only fanned the castle's fearful screams as commoners and nobles alike ran as death itself circled above their heads.

Olenna could only glare as the dragons settled themselves outside her castle walls with a booming sound that shook the foundations of one of the oldest castles in Westeros. It felt as if the very foundation stones of Highgarden were moving because of the dragons. Taking a deep breath, she addressed Maester Lomys and Gormon.

“Come with me. We need to welcome the Targaryens into the castle.” said Olenna, walking out of her solar with the two men closely following her.

It was a simple affair, inviting the ruling queen and king inside the walls of Highgarden. The opulent ceremonies and the usual bowing and scraping were swept away as the Targaryen royals just marched past all of those preparations without giving any heed. The king and queen barely spared them the time to properly string a few sentences together. Instead, the royal couple marched straight for Highgarden’s throne room on King Daeron’s insistence.

If the Targaryens gave anyone much heed, it was Willas, her grandson.

“That’s the tower of Green Men. It is said to be built during the Age of Heroes.” Olenna heard Willas say to the Targaryens.

She eyed the king, who didn’t bat an eye at her grandson’s attempts to get into their good graces. The queen, on the other hand, was much more amicable as she did at least pretend to be interested in her grandson’s rushed ramblings.

Olenna couldn’t help but stare at the two dragons. Unlike the Targaryens of the past, she couldn’t easily make a judgement about Daeron Targaryen and Daenerys Targaryen. She knew enough to understand that Daeron Targaryen was far more dangerous than Daenerys Targaryen. Daeron Targaryen was a man who wiped out most of the Freys in a single night. But word from Essos spoke of a ruthless streak in the queen. Yet, the Targaryen queen had so far appeared mellow compared to her husband.

In no time, they reached the throne room of Highgarden, all thanks to the quick legs of Daeron Targaryen, who had paid no heed to any of their attempts to communicate and was singularly focused on reaching the throne room. As the large oak doors were pushed open by the servants, Olenna felt dread settle in the bottom of her stomach at the glint she saw in the Targaryen king’s grey eyes.

“Your grace, this is the throne room of Highgarden. According to legend, Garth Greenhand fashioned himself a living throne out of an oak tree he planted atop this hill. Its name was...”

“Oakenseat, the living throne of Garth the Green and all the Gardners that followed him until Garth the Seventh, with roots deep beneath the ground, intertwined with the great Heart Tree. It was indeed a sight to see.” said Daeron, smoothly cutting into Willas’ long-winded elucidation.

“Yes, your grace.” Willas said, somewhat surprised someone outside the Reach knows such obscure legends about Highgarden.

“A living throne, my love?” Daenerys asked incredulously.

“I’m afraid my grandson is rather taken with old tales that make no sense to most, my queen.” Olenna interjected smoothly, hoping to stay in the good graces of the dragons.

“On the contrary, it makes quite a lot of sense. Greensight is a powerful gift, and none were as powerful as Garth the Green, who was a powerful skinchanger on top of a Greenseer.” said Daeron.

Olenna couldn’t help but let out a scoff earning a raised eyebrow from the king.

“Forgive me if I don’t give much credence to old myths.” said Olenna, barely holding back her urge to roll her eyes not to come off as disrespectful.

“Of course. You Andals can never understand.” Daeron let out a derisive snort before walking forward.

Olenna kept mum as she watched Daron Targaryen climb the steps to the white marble throne of Highgarden. Without hesitation, the king sat on the throne, looking as regal as possible.

It was then Olenna noticed the silver streaks of hair on the king’s head. She thought Lord Eddard’s nephew looked more like a Stark than his trueborn children. Yet, the king seems to exhibit many Targaryen traits.

‘Were the people so blind to ignore the silver hair of the bastard of Winterfell all these years?’ she wondered.

Maybe, Lord Stark was wiler than she thought. The Lord of Winterfell might’ve procured dye for his nephew to hide the valyrian traits.

“Highgarden is blessed by your presence, your grace.” said Willas, bending his knee. “House Tyrell has always supported the dragon’s cause. We shall support House Targaryen in the days to come as loyal subjects to the crown.”

Olenna observed the king, who was not paying much heed to her grandson’s posturing. Instead, the dragon king was rather enjoying himself on the throne made of white marble and silky cushions of Myr.

“Sansa told me that you intended to make her the Lady of Highgarden after her betrothal was broken with Joffrey Waters. Is that true?” Daeron asked.

“Y...your grace. I...”

Seeing Willas stutter, Olenna strode forward to pick up the slack lest her grandson makes a fool of himself in the court.

“It was my suggestion, your grace.” Olenna bravely addressed the king, looking straight into his eyes as she answered the unspoken question. “Lady Sansa was lost in the capital and mistreated by the Lannisters. I hoped the child would be safe in Highgarden under our protection. Sansa was a sweet and innocent child. She’d have loved my Willas and enjoyed her time in Highgarden instead of remaining under the yoke of the lions.”

“Ah, yes. Empathy! Tyrells are well known for their empathy. It must have helped that through Sansa, House Tyrell would gain the key to possessing Winterfell. Isn’t that so, Lady Olenna?” Daeron asked, his grey eyes now looking sharp as he stared her down.

“Your grace. We didn’t mean to...” Willas tried to interject.

“Oh, come off it, Lord Willas.” Daeron laughed, waving his hands dismissively. “In your place, I’d have done the same. Politics is a game of opportunity and possibilities. In fact, I take pride in being an avid opportunistic politician. Isn’t that right, my love?”

"I'm intimately aware." Daenerys said in a sweet voice.

Oleanna didn't know whether the queen was mocking the king or merely agreeing with the general spirit of the statement.

"That's why I'm sure you can understand my decision to attain all lands under House Tyrell."

The declaration by the king brought nothing but a shock to Olenna. She stared at the Targaryen monarch with her mouth open and eyes wide with terror.

"Henceforth, as per my order, all the lands claimed by House Tyrell, which includes Highgarden and Brightwater Keep, shall be under the auspices of the Iron Throne until I find worthy candidates to inherit these seats. House Tyrell and all its members are hereby expelled from the Reach, never to set foot inside the present borders of the southern kingdom on pain of death." Daeron declared further, heedless of the furious whispers inside the throne room.

"Ser Edwyn." Daenerys called for the Manderly knight.

"Your grace." Ser Edwyn accepted a scroll offered by the queen on a bent knee.

"You are named the castellan of Highgarden until the crown finds a suitable lord to ascend to this seat and take up the mantle. His grace and the small council hope that you execute this task most dutifully." said Daenerys.

"Your grace! This... this is most unfair! This is..."

"This is opportunistic, I know. I'm merely following the example of those who play the Game, my lord. You all love your precious Game, do you not? The Game of Thrones, you call it. Well, I've decided to play this Game that you all seem to like so much." Daeron said mockingly.

"Ser Edwyn." Daeron thundered suddenly.

"Your grace." Ser Edwyn stood straight, looking eagerly at his king.

"See to it that the Tyrells are escorted out of the borders of the Reach. They shall leave the premises of Highgarden today itself. Give them the same number of possessions my cousin enjoyed in the Red Keep, that is, the clothes in her possession."

"Your grace, please. We beg for your mercy." Willas begged on his knees even as the guards took him by his arms to drag him away.

"My mercy would see to it that Ser Garlan Tyrell, Margaery Tyrell, and her husband Tommen Waters shall be sent to your side once you find a home outside the Reach." said Daeron, looking unkindly into the eyes of Olenna, who could only watch helplessly as House Tyrell fell into nothingness.

"Let this be a lesson to those who love to play the Game of Thrones. Nothing escapes my eyes and ears from the Wall to the sandy shores of Dorne. If you play the Game again, I'll bring nothing but ruin upon you and your loved ones. But to those who bend before the House of Dragon and accept the King's peace, I offer you my friendship and protection. What shall the proud lords and knights of the Reach choose?"

The last scene Olenna saw in the throne room of Highgarden before she was escorted out was the rows and rows of kneeling knights and lords of the Reach.

'We lost.' Olenna thought, a single tear spilling from her eyes.

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Daeron kept an eye on his wife, who was still looking at the intricate cave system they found near the castle's east side. The workers had shaved off quite a vast quantity of Dragonglass to ship the mineral to King's Landing for making weapons and arming his army before they marched North. Some Dragonglass weapons were made in Dragonstone and shipped off to White Harbour. The North was not lacking in Dragonglass as they had the Mountain Clans to supply them. But heavy winter had made it difficult to transport the mineral through the narrow passes of the Northern Mountains. Unfortunately, the next primary source of Dragonglass was in Skagos. The island was sparsely populated to mine enough quantities of the mineral to be useful, and the Skagosi were unreliable in the first place.

"We've managed to fulfil the required volume of export of unfinished Dragonglass mineral into White Harbour without straining the coffers. Although, I'm afraid we couldn't achieve the target of arrowheads as demanded by Lord Manderly. I had written about this to Grandmaester Marwyn." Maester Maester Pylos reported.

"Yes, I remember Marwyn mentioning something of that sort." Daeron nodded at the Maester of Dragonstone.

The tides crashed noisily into the beach floor, making Daeron look to the sea, where he could see Drogon and Rhaegal circling in the distance. He assumed they were looking to score a shark.

"Tell me more about the people here. Are there any issues that I should be aware of?" Daeron asked, keeping the bloody and disastrous invasion of his wife's army in mind.

He could see the reluctance in the Maester's eyes as plain as day. The way the young Maester's eyes went to his wife, who was feeding Viserion some goats, was enough indication.

"You may speak freely, Maester Pylos. I'm not ignorant of what the Red Priest did on the island." Said Daeron, prodding the young maester to speak his mind.

"Your grace, the invasion was far too bloody. Most residents have fled to the interior parts of the island, fearing the foreigners. The Red Priests had burned many men whom they perceived as their enemies. When the Faith inevitably discovers what happened here, it'll cause you many problems."

"I see." Daeron stared thoughtfully into the vast sea for a moment.

"I shall send forth some trusted Northmen to remove the troublesome lot quietly."

“Perhaps, your grace, it’d be better if it was done in public. The people of Dragonstone need to see justice served to alleviate any resentment.” Maester Pylos suggested.

“I shall take that into consideration.” Daeron promised. “I’ll arrange things with Ser Wylis Manderly and Ser Jorah. While I doubt I can reverse all the damages done, I can try my best to alleviate the fears of the local populace.”

“Thank you, your grace.” Maester Pylos bowed his head in gratitude.

“I’ll need a detailed inventory of the artefacts in Dragonstone as well as the state of the coffers. I’ll also need the tax earnings of Dragonstone during Stannis’ and the Targaryen’s rule. I’ll need all those details by tomorrow.”

“It shall be done, your grace.”

Daeron nodded at the Maester before dismissing the man. He watched the young Maester leave the beachhead. He’d have removed the Maester altogether, but Ser Davos vouched for the Maester. Only time would tell whether Maester Pylos would be useful to his plans for Dragonstone. The island was one of the most important holdings under House Targaryen because of the dragons. There was no other place in the Seven Kingdoms where the dragons could roost safely. The Dragonmont was the only volcanic area under Targaryen ownership. Because Dragonstone was hosting the home of dragons, it was equally important to ensure that no elements on the island threatened the dragons. A situation that arose in King’s Landing during Rhaenyra Targaryen’s reign could not be allowed to unfold again. A popular uprising in Dragonstone or King’s Landing, the like of which happened during the Dance of Dragons, was not desirable.

He feared something along those lines happening as he was about to leave for the North to face the Long Night. It was one of the reasons why he had aggressively campaigned in the Crownlands and the Reach. It was also the reason why he was playing off the Dornish lords against each other to create as much conflict among his enemies. His decision to pull back the knights and lords of the Reach from the Hightower-Redwyne campaign against the Ironborn was also taken, keeping this in mind. Ser Edwyn Manderly would be consolidating his hold over Highgarden and leading the invasion into the Westerlands to take Casterly Rock, Castamare and Lannisport. If the Lannisters surrendered without a fight, then he was all for it. He could always have the Lannisters expelled from the Westerlands after the Others were put down. The rest of the Reachmen would be travelling with him to the North, where they get to prove their newly sworn vows by fighting in his name and defending his kingdoms from the Others.

“Daeron!”

Daeron broke out of his musings to see his wife beckoning him as the wind blew from the east. Letting out a sigh, he heeded her call and moved closer to his wife and Viserion.

“He seems happy to see you.” Daeron said, looking at Viserion, who was nudging his wife’s hand with his snout.

“He has been alone for some time. Are you sure we can’t take Viserion to the North?” Daenerys asked, petting the bronze wings of the lone riderless dragon.

“He’ll be without a rider in the North. A riderless dragon in a warzone can be easily killed off. It has happened during the Dance in the past. With the Others involved, the threat to Viserion increases a hundredfold.” said Daeron, patting the cream scales of the dragon.

“Still...” Daenerys looked sad, leaning against one of the wings of Viserion. “he’ll be all alone in Dragonstone.”

“He’ll be safe and warm in the Dragonmont.” said Daeron, holding his wife at her waist and pressing a kiss on her cheek.

“Now, my dear wife. You mentioned something about making love in the sands of Dragonstone.” He whispered against Daenerys’ ear.

“Did I?” Dany asked innocently.

“Oh, I remember it quite clearly.” Daeron growled, sliding the blue silk dress his wife wore down her shoulder while leaving a trail of kisses.

That day, on the sandy shore of Dragonstone, they made love with the dragons and the evening sun as their witness, forgetting all their worries about the future. For they knew nothing but cold, death and darkness were waiting for them in the North.