

Penn or Old Penn as his friends called him has been a farmer all his life. His pa was a farmer and his old grandpa was a farmer and so on. He came from a long family of farmers and therefore he became one too. He and his ancestors have ploughed the fields of Starks for as long as he could remember. The nature of their craft was such Penn and his family had to move around from field to field according to the weather. When the snow starts their first fall, he'd pack up his family from their small hut north of Winterfell and move into Wintertown. The southern fields were much warmer and therefore more resilient for crops. The snowing also comes slower compared to the southern fields for some reason.

Now, things have changed in Winterfell. Summer snows should've covered the northern fields of Winterfell but Lord Harrion's blessing has warmed the lands and not a pint of snow could be seen anywhere. The fields were also teeming with harvest just weeks after planting new crops. It took many farmers like him a lot of time to adjust. There was even fear that the faster harvests were going to be wasted as the crops needed to be sold or stored safely. Again, the Greenhand's gifts allowed them to store the harvest indefinitely without damage. Some called the second son of Lord Stark the second coming of the Builder. It was rumoured the lad was blessed by the Old Gods and even managed to raise castles and towers out of his magic. But farmers like Penn called the lad the Greenhand for turning their fields with flourishing crops and somehow storing the produce without spoiling.

Old Penn had no idea how those warehouses in Winterfell kept the crops fresh and usable for a long time other than it has something to do with magic. He didn't care for it either so long as he got paid what he was owed by the Starks.

"Hey, Penn. Where are ya going this early in the morn?"

It was none other than Slon and his ilk making Penn scowl. For as long as Penn knew Slon and his family worked on a nearby field and their families have always been rivals. He didn't know the reason but his pa never liked Slon's pa and the rivalry was something he inherited. To make matters worse they were even neighbours which made for awkward confrontations from time to time.

"I've got better things to do Slon. What do ya want huh?" he said gruffly to his bald rival.

"I don't see yer sons with ya, Penn. Still no word from them. Whatever should've happened to them I wonder."

Penn gritted his teeth and continued walking to the field hiding the worry he had for his sons. Two of his eldest sons have gone west to the new castle of the Greenhand following the promises of new job opportunities. It was a perilous journey passing through the Wolfswood all the way to Sea Dragon Point where men have not dared to settle for centuries. It has been well over seven months since he had seen or heard anything from his two sons. He was concerned as so were his wife and younger daughter. If the Starks hadn't started distributing the steel ploughs he would've never allowed his sons to abandon the fields. The steel plough made his work easier as the hard soil of the fields stood no chance against the steel tip. With the new plough, he could till the fields faster and easier compared to the wooden plough he was using in the past.

"Ya don't need to worry about my sons, Slon. They're my blood and were born in a proper winter. They're not like yer summer snow pups hanging aroun' ya." Penn growled.

"Ya speak arrogantly, Penn. I'll soon see ya break yer back in the fields ya old fucker. Those winter pups are most likely dead or they've abandoned yer old mug." Slon smirked vindictively.

“Sod off.” Penn snarled before continuing his walk toward the field amidst the jeering of Slon and his sons.

Penn worked all day refusing to even go for his noon break. His worries and prayers for his sons fuelled him better than bread ever could and that made him work all the harder. Despite putting up a brave front he worried rightly for his two sons.

‘If something bad happened to my pups...’ Penn worriedly thought.

He could not bear such a thought. He had to believe his sons were safe and would come back one day. He was growing old and he could work for only so long. He could not bear to think of asking his daughter to work the fields with him.

‘No daughter should take up such work while her brothers and father are breathing.’ Penn thought resolutely.

It was evening when he decided to finish his work on the field and leave for his home. He was sweaty and filled with filth from head to toe.

‘Heh. The signs of a good day’s work.’ Penn mused, carrying his plough.

Just as he walked a few paces he saw his daughter running towards him with an excited face.

“Pa! Terrence and Yoren, they came back.” his daughter excitedly yelled.

The relief he felt when he heard those words being uttered from his daughter’s mouth was indescribable. It was as if a weight was lifted off his old heart.

“Thank the Old Gods.” Penn muttered a silent prayer in relief.

He didn't care whether his boys were returning empty-handed or not. At least, they returned before the snow set in disrupting his work. His sons could now help him till the field. There was silver to be made while the fields were teeming with the Greenhand’s blessing. But when he finally reached his hut, he was surprised to see an ox nearby with his sons.

“Pa we bought the ox from Wintertown. Ye won’t have to work too hard with this one ready to plough the fields.” said Yoren.

“But...but how?” Penn spluttered, looking on in disbelief that his sons managed to buy an ox and that too a hunky one that looked like it could plough the fields half a hundred times without breaking a sweat. Oxen were expensive costing some gold dragons and he could not afford it unless he had his family go hungry for months and save up the silver.

“We got a job as glassmakers in Avalon, Pa.” said Terrence making Penn blink in surprise. “If we save enough gold in the coming months we think we might be able to buy a piece of land close to the castle.”

“Glassmakers? My sons buying land? I don’t understand.” he stared at his sons gaping openly.

“Oh, Pa. Let’s just say we’ve found our fortunes in Lord Harrions land. Come, let us talk inside. There is a lot to tell ya.”

Penn numbly followed into his hut with his sons never realizing that his fate and that of his family were changed forever. Similarly, fortunes were being rewritten for many families in the North.

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Harry looked over the numbers once more in the parchment before looking at the Forresters sitting across from him.

Gregor Forrester, the current lord of Ironrath, had a softer face. A thick brown beard covered most of the man's face but the lord of Ironrath was soft-spoken and a well-mannered one which was hard to come by in the North. Most of the Northern lords Harry had seen so far were rough or boisterous. The Forresters were a welcome change from that pattern although Harry had his doubts when it comes to Lord Forrester's son and heir Rodrik Forrester. Like Lord Gregor, his heir was of brown hair and sported a similar beard. However, Rodrik Forrester looked more like a Glover, especially the steely look in his eyes that reminded Harry of Galbart Glover.

"The price is acceptable Lord Forrester. How quickly do you think you can supply the ironwood I require?" Harry asked, steepling his fingers and looking curiously at the Forresters.

"We don't have the supply of wood ready in our hand to meet your requirement. We'll have to fell new trees from our lands and it'll take a while." Lord Gregor said tentatively.

"How long?" Harry asked

"Three months or more. We don't usually get such large orders, my lord. We'll need time to hire more workers and gather more tools. There is also the issue of transportation."

"I understand." Harry nodded, having expected this already. "I want all that I need within four months. Should you require anything you may contact me."

Harry looked at Marwyn who gave him another sheet of parchment. He quickly wrote the number of gold dragons and silver stags the Forresters are owed before pressing his seal at the bottom of the parchment. After taking one last look at the parchment to make sure everything was in order, he held out the parchment toward Lord Forrester.

"You only need to show it to Lord Poole. He'll be arranging the gold for transport within a fortnight." said Harry.

"Thank you, Lord Harrion. We'll make sure to deliver all the ironwood you need within the stipulated time." Lord Gregor said, handing over the parchment to his son and signalling Rodrik Forrester to leave.

Harry frowned as Lord Gregor Forrester stayed behind.

"If I could have a moment of your time my lord. It is a matter of some importance for your ears only."

Harry looked searchingly at the lord of Ironrath before agreeing.

A few minutes later Harry watched stoically as Lord Gregor leave him be in his solar. Marwyn immediately slinked back into the solar once the lord of Ironrath left.

"Is there something troubling you Harrion?" Marwyn asked getting comfortable in his seat.

"No. Did you know Lord Gregor Forrester has two bastards he keeps a secret from everyone in his family?" Harry asked rubbing his eyes and slinking back in his chair.

“No, I did not but I’m not surprised. It’s to be expected from most lords and not all of them are as forthcoming as Lord Stark when it comes to acknowledging the product of their dalliances.” said Marwyn. “I gather Lord Gregor wanted to discuss something about his bastard with you for a reason.”

“Aye. They have magical powers.” said Harry.

“They?” Marwyn asked.

“Mmhm. Elsera and Josera Snow. When I visited Deepwood Motte the Glovers told me rumours of a warg in the Ironwood hills. I didn’t take them seriously then but now...” Harry trailed off.

“So, they are wargs. What does Lord Gregor want from you?” Marwyn asked curiously intrigued by the prospect of finding more magical power in the North.

“Josera Snow is the warg but his sister is something else that has Lord Gregor worried. I suppose the man is hoping I can house them safely in Avalon for obvious reasons.” Harry shrugged.

“It could be advantageous with the goal you have in mind.” Marwyn reminded his young lord.

“A school for magic. I know. We are nowhere near the capabilities of hosting a school in Avalon. We need committed teachers, books in different fields of study and a committed number of children for the school to succeed.” said Harry.

“Well, I could take a few students and start them on teaching numbers and letters if I some adjustments are made in some of my duties.” Marwyn suggested.

Harry thought about it for a moment before shaking his head negatively. Marwyn was someone he needed on beck and call mostly because keeping a watch on the ravens was now a necessity thanks to the glass exports picking up pace from White Harbour. Besides, the maester was otherwise busy taking up some magical lessons from him or one of his Valkyrie. Suddenly it occurred to him Marwyn could free up his time if someone else took up the job of ravenry.

“What if your duties were reduced by delegating watching over the ravens to someone else? You could have more time and perhaps even take a few students along the way as a start.” Harry suggested.

“You want another maester to take up the raven duties?” Marwyn asked with a raised eyebrow.

“No. I think it’s time that you take up a student and pass on your knowledge to handle the ravens. Perhaps one of the Valkyrie could be taught the skill of ravenry?”

Marwyn thought over it for a moment and found some merit to the idea. It was way better than writing to the Citadel asking for another Maester for Avalon. The grey rats of the Citadel would pounce on such an opportunity and send one of their stooges to keep an eye on everything in Avalon. This way he could ensure the grey rats never get their filthy hands on Avalon and at the same time he saw an opportunity to dislodge the Citadel’s hold on knowledge in Westeros.

‘If I could pass on the knowledge of ravenry to more people in the North then perhaps the castles of the North could have Northerners as ravenmasters.’ Marwyn thought.

“You know what, let me pass on a message to someone I know in Braavos. I think I can get some knowledgeable teachers from Essos to set up the school you have in mind for teaching letters and numbers. Meanwhile, I think Adela might be suited to the task of mastering ravenry.”

Harry just nodded having already thought along the same vein long ago. He watched Marwyn take his leave before magically closing the door. As the door slammed shut the sound awoke Fenris who was sleeping soundly on a cushion made of silk atop a trunk. The black wolf let out a huff of protest that amused him before lazily dozing off.

His thoughts once again went back to the Citadel and their hold on knowledge. The monopoly the Citadel was holding over many fields of study didn't sit well with him. Inviting experts in fields of mathematics, medicine, and many other fields of study from Essos to teach in his new school has always been the plan. Aside from just focusing on magical education, Harry wanted a wide assortment of subjects of non-magical nature as well. The only thing holding him back was the screening process that requires to weed out the foreign spies from the group. But now, the wards were fully functional and could screen out the rats with ease.

There was one other matter that also was a prerequisite before he opened his school. He needed to find a healthy habitat for dragons to flourish. The date was set for the hatching of the two eggs. It was to be on a night with a Supermoon in the sky. The closeness of the moon to the planet would ensure the surging of magical power. If his calculations were correct then the reviving ritual should capture enough dense magic from the ley lines enabling the resurrection of dragons into the world. Normally, a magical flame was more than enough for dragons to hatch but he had tried that already to no luck. The usual means were not enough quite possibly thanks to the role dragons play in this world.

It was a theory at this point but one he thought held some measure of substance. Dragons played the role of balancing magic in this world. They made their home in places of great magical power and kept the magic in those places balanced by becoming an avatar of sorts. They amass great volumes of magical power in their body and thereby embodying certain unique characteristics of the place they call home. It was the only explanation he could think of when it comes to the existence of ice dragons. Fire dragons attained their nature through their exposure to the Fourteen Flames of Valyria. Then there were sea dragons to consider but he had yet to encounter one.

Anyway, it was abundantly clear a great surge in magic was the only way to bring forth dragons out of their eggs. The ice dragon would need a source of cold to grow healthy and the fire dragon would require a heat source.

'No doubt, it'll be tricky to create such habitats.' Harry thought.

The problem was it was nigh impossible to facilitate such polar opposite habitats for the dragons. Not to mention the dragons would need a constant stream of magic for their growth. That means the dragons would have to be close to Avalon to take advantage of the ley lines.

'But how?' Harry wondered, letting out a sigh and leaning back into his chair.

Then his eyes fell on Fenris and the trunk on which the wolf was sleeping which immediately sparked an idea in his mind.

"A magical trunk." Harry whispered, his eyes widening in surprise.

It'd be a difficult task to set up all the charms and runes to create a conducive environment for both dragons.

'Since when did a little difficulty ever stop me?' Harry thought.

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The screams coming from the room made Eddard worry. Oh, he knew Maester Luwin knew best but as a husband, he rightly worried for his dear wife. He could not help but pace back and forth across the length of the hall.

'There is no need to worry. Everything will be all right.' Eddard tried to console himself but it didn't succeed.

He continued to pace back and forth shooting looks at the closed door from time to time whenever his Cat let out a scream. It was his fault really. They had come to a mutual agreement that they'd be having no more children. Many women have lost their lives in the birthing bed and he didn't want that fate for his wife and deprive his children of their mother. But one night his passion got the better of him and two months later Maester Luwin pronounced Catelyn pregnant.

"You should calm down. Mother is healthy and I've used spells and potions ready to make everything smooth." said Harry, making Eddard jump.

"I thought I told Jory not to let you, Robb or Sansa, past the corridor." Eddard said, frowning unhappily.

"You should've known by now that no one can keep me away from anywhere." said Harry.

Eddard sighed knowing well the truth in that statement. He knew all too well how difficult it was to restrict his son's movements. He was also reminded of the reason why he and Catelyn decided to not have any more children. The succession of Winterfell was secured with Robb and Harrion. Then there were Sansa and Arya. Their children were headstrong and took up enough of both of their attention every day. Sansa was fiercely independent taking after Harrion in behaviour. His oldest daughter only inherited the looks from his wife. He had a feeling that Arya would be way worse than Sansa. Robb on the other hand was all prim and proper. More composed would be the proper description he'd use and so was the case for Jon.

Eddard blinked as the door suddenly opened with Maester Luwin poking his head outside.

"My lord, it's a boy."

"Aha! A little brother that I can spoil. This day gets better and better."

Eddard heard his son say making him palm his face. He had prayed and prayed to the Old Gods to give him a daughter precisely fearing this sort of thing. It seems the Gods were intent on making his life as difficult as possible.