

we're a mystery which will never happen again

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/14292525) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/14292525>.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	Gen
Fandoms:	Game of Thrones (TV) , A Song of Ice and Fire - George R. R. Martin , A Song of Ice and Fire & Related Fandoms
Relationships:	Jon Snow & Arya Stark & Bran Stark & Rickon Stark & Robb Stark & Sansa Stark , Arya Stark & Sansa Stark , Jon Snow & Sansa Stark , Ned Stark & Sansa Stark , Jeyne Poole & Sansa Stark , Rickon Stark & Sansa Stark , Jon Snow & Sansa Stark & Daenerys Targaryen , Theon Greyjoy & Sansa Stark
Characters:	Sansa Stark , Arya Stark , Jon Snow , Robb Stark , Bran Stark , Rickon Stark , Ned Stark , Catelyn Tully Stark , Jeyne Poole , Theon Greyjoy
Additional Tags:	Time Travel , Time Travel Fix-It , Alternate Universe - Time Travel , Unreliable Narrator , Manipulative Sansa Stark , Merging of Book and Show Canon , Canon-Typical Violence , im trying to make this an epic but i dont think im succeeding , BAMF Sansa Stark , by manipulative i mean she is trying to set things in the right direction, not to villify her , Catelyn Tully Stark Doesn't Hate Jon Snow , Sansa Stark-centric
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of unbroken: an ode to sansa
Stats:	Published: 2018-04-12 Updated: 2021-10-11 Words: 10,902 Chapters: 7/?

we're a mystery which will never happen again

by [opalesencelied](#), [StarryEyedAsteria \(opalesencelied\)](#)

Summary

“The past is written, the ink is dry,” she says as she hugs her knees to her chest, Bran had said this once, more to himself than anyone else, “but ink can be washed away.”

Notes

i'm always a slut for time travel fics. (title and chapter title are both from an e.e. cumming's poem).

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

a miracle which has never happened before

Sansa sits on her throne of ice and glass, waiting for the Others to come. She stays in the cold keep, long abandoned, for there must always be a Stark in Winterfell and she is the last Stark left living. (Father was first, beheaded in front of her by their king. Robb and Mother were killed next, betrayed by someone they thought they could trust. Jon died once but then he lived again, only to be killed by the Night King's own hand. The Night King sought Bran out, who once died a false death, so he could not inform them of the Night King's moves. Rickon was felled by a White Walker's sword, before that he fought in the savage ways of Skargos, taking countless wights back to the grave with him. Arya was last, she took three White Walkers with her, she did not rise as a wight, for no White Walker didn't fear the name Arya Stark.)

Salty tears well up into her eyes and she grips the torch in hand tighter. *'They're coming,'* the wind sings, *'They're coming for you, Sansa Stark.'* She doesn't falter, Winterfell would burn again, this time taking the army of the dead with it.

There are sounds of ice cracking and she knows that they are coming.

Instead of a White Walker, a wight, or even the Night King, it is some other abomination that enters her keep.

It stands as tall as Hodor once did, with blank eyes and silvery skin. "*Child,*" it rasps in a terrible voice that makes her want to cover her ears (she resists the urge), "*What do you wish?*"

She instead of answering, she asks, "What are you?" Her voice is strong, unwavering, and she must be as well.

It tilts its head (it's an ugly thing, made of silvery flesh with blank white eyes, it's mouth reminded her of the Heart Tree in the Godswood but she knows better than to voice that sentiment), "*What am I? Dear child, I am the Neverborn.*"

It's a name she recognized from the oldest songs Old Nan sung when she was just a child (as most are, Old Nan is dead, never to tell beautiful tales again), but she doesn't remember the context. Still, Sansa keeps her head held high, "The Neverborn? I've never heard of such a thing."

It ignores her, slowly looking over her. "*I see,*" it says, "*You wish to go back to before, very well.*"

It looks to the torch in her hand and suddenly the torch falling to the ground, fire spreading. Sansa doesn't move, for they say fire is cleansing and she desperately needs to be cleansed.

She closes her eyes and let's the fire take her. She doesn't see the Neverborn smile, showing blood red teeth and black gums.

Sansa Stark wakes up in a room long forgotten (Winterfell burned twice now, once by a traitor, once by herself). The furs are stacked heavily on top of her, perhaps to emulate her mother in some way, she is of the North and she has no need for extra furs in Summer.

She pushes the furs back, she has no need of sleep anymore (not if she's back here, back in her childhood room from before King's Landing).

She is a ghost in these halls, an old soul. Her mind rages and body burns once more. Her steps are deft and knowing, despite not walking these halls in nearly a decade.

She takes a deep breath before taking one last step, there she stands in front of her little sister's room (dead, dead little sister). She takes a breath before turning the knob to her sister's door, opening it enough to see her sister's sleeping form (not a dying dream then, her sibling's are always dead or dying in those, but she can clearly see Arya move now).

The door creaked as she opened the door to her younger brothers' room, they both slept on, probably attributing it to their lady mother. Sansa smiles at the boys, they're curled around each other in Bran's bed, Rickon tended to sleep in his brother's bed when he got too old to cling to their mother. The door shuts quietly.

Sansa treads carefully as she walks towards Robb and Jon's matching doors, it's probably not the best idea to check on Jon, he sleeps lightly after all. Robb's door opens easily and Sansa sees him drooling on his pillow, it brings a smile to her face.

She does not dare to approach her parent's shared room, her father sleeps lightly and if she enters he will surely notice.

Lady! She thinks and perhaps she thought it odd not to have Lady by her side when she slept, but her mind consumed by thoughts of her lost Direwolf.

She makes for the kennel, not even trying to hide her glee at the thought of seeing her precious Lady once again. She remembers the way to the kennel by heart and she lets it guide her way.

She enters the kennels with a confident stride, searching for the Direwolves she missed so much. She looks and looks but only finds long forgotten hunting dogs.

Has Father gone to behead the oathbreaker yet? Sansa wonders, knowing that the Direwolves are found soon after that.

She leaves the kennel with disappointment weighing heavy on her heart. Her nightgown is light and it makes no sound as she walks Winterfell's walls (unlike her dresses - the ones she made herself, the ones made for the North only) and she returns to her bedroom with ease.

When she sits on her bed, she doesn't bother to wrap herself in furs, she doesn't feel the cold like a Southerner would (as a child, she would have preferred to forget her Northern roots, but her mind is not one of a child any longer). "The past is written, the ink is dry," she says as she hugs her knees to her chest, Bran had said this once, more to himself than anyone else, "but ink can be washed away."

She sits there for ages, unknowing of the time passing. Perhaps her face is wet with tears and her eyes are red, but she pays it no mind. She sits there until her mother comes searching for her.

Lady Catelyn finds her precious daughter sitting on her bed alone, with a face full of dried tears. "Sansa," she says as she rushes to her daughter's side, "What is wrong, child?"

"A nightmare, simply," Sansa says as she presses her head against her Mother's chest.

Sansa missed her mother's touch much after her death that it is a relief to be held by her once again. "Do you wish to speak of it?" Catelyn asks as she runs her fingers through Sansa's hair.

She swallows before speaking, "I dreamt you died, you and Father and Robb and Bran and Rickon. Arya was gone, I think she survived." Sansa's voice trembles as she speaks, she hates to be reminded of such times but keeps to her story all the same.

"Can you help me dress?" Sansa asks as she sits up. Sansa misses her mother's touch but hurries to pick out a dress all the same.

Sansa picks out a soft woolen dress, not a silk dress in the Southern style she would have usually chosen. Mother will think it's because of the nightmare, she wants to be reminded of home.

Mother helps her slip into the dress which Sansa wears like a second skin. Sansa resists the urge to take Mother's hand, she strides out the door without a purpose but it is easy to fake having one.

When she enters the hall to break her fast, she feels eyes on her immediately, Sansa ignores them as she takes her seat at the High Table beside Arya. "Sister," she greets as she begins to eat.

She doesn't speak to her parents or siblings while she breaks her fast, as soon as she is finished, she begins to make her way to the godswood. The cold isn't bone-chilling, not like in Winter, it's just refreshing.

She sits on the bench in the godswood, right next to the small pond. Once Sansa wasn't sure which gods she kept to, the old gods or the Seven, but since the Seven have failed her and now, she now only keeps to the old gods.

As she sits, she thinks of her siblings, her siblings from her old life. Robb, the war hero and the Young Wolf, a brilliant strategist and the first King in the North in three hundred years. Jon, the Lord Commander of the Night's Watch and the twice lived, the bridge between the Westerosi and the Free Folk, the merging of Ice and Fire. Arya, the second coming of Lyanna Stark and a Faceless Assassin, the Wild Wolf and the Slayer of White Walkers. Bran, the Three Eyed Crow, the All-Seer and the White Walker's Bane. Rickon, Brandon Stark reincarnate and Skargosi Raised, a Wildling in all but Name. Her brother's and sister, all better than her.

She was the third eldest but she was the last left living, the last Queen in the North (the last Queen in Westeros).

i am lost and led only by stars

Chapter Notes

direwolves!!!!!!!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sansa is the child of snakes dressed in lion-skin and mockingbird feathers. For all that she is Catelyn and Eddard Stark's daughter, Cersei Lannister and Petyr Baelish shaped her into the woman she became. Sansa has been a Stone and a Stark, a bastard and a highborn girl. She is a liar and a deceiver, a red haired beauty with a silver tongue and a heart of ice (she is not honorable, not like Father or Robb or Jon).

Sansa brushes her hair that morning, humming softly. Yesterday, she had given the castle quite a fright, they had never seen her so unsettled. She barely ate and spent the day in the godswood, they called it a bad omen (their little lady going to pray all day, having barely touched her food? The Doom must coming for them) but Mother had set them straight. Mother had told them Sansa was unsettled because of a nightmare, that is all, and they stopped speaking of her like an omen.

Her brush runs through her hair easily, gliding almost. Sansa smiles, a pretty little that is genuine for once. She thinks of Joffrey, purple faced and choking on his own blood, it's always enough to make her smile.

She dresses in Southern silks once more, she must act like the Southern-obsessed girl from before (her skin crawls when she is dressed in silks and she can barely stand to wear them, all she wants to do is rip them off her skin). She smiles sweetly with Joffrey's dying face in mind, her sewing is better than ever, and she is more interested in gossiping with Jeyne than insulting her sister.

She writes a letter to Jon Arryn (his death is the catalyst, the beginning of the end) and pawns it off to Maester Luwin with a smile, he doesn't question her. (Nobody questions little lady Sansa, Lady Catelyn's perfect daughter).

Sansa is made of stardust and steel, she's meant to *last*. She is no longer a girl of porcelain, who would break at the slightest criticism, she is Sansa Stark of Winterfell, the Queen Who Remained.

She locks her hands together and walks with purpose (she is a queen in a girl's body, nobody can deny). She knocks on Jon's door lightly, hardly expecting him to be in his room.

Jon opens the door, most likely expecting Robb or Arya, and finding her (his least favorite sibling, the one who treated him the worst). "Sansa?" He asks, confused, "Is something wrong?"

“No,” she says, but her mind screams the opposite, “may we speak?” Her smile is as pretty as it is fake and perhaps, Jon notices.

He opens the door for her to enter, which she does with gratitude. When he closes the door, Sansa turns to him with pleading eyes, “Jon, I need you to do something for me, please.”

He looks upon her with concerned eyes (he has every right, why would Sansa could to him, of all people?), “Sansa, what’s wrong?” He asks slowly, like he needs to calm her down.

Sansa lies like she breathes, but telling the truth, it had been so long since she had done that. “Can’t you feel it, Jon?” He simply shakes his head. “Animals are fleeing South, even from North of the Wall. There’s something bad coming and we need to prepare for it.”

Jon breathes deeply, like he’s about to lecture her but thinks better of it, “Sansa…”

“Please, Jon, I just need you to commission me a dagger from Mikken, that is all. I won’t bother you after that.” She frowns slightly and then continues, “I am sorry for how I treated you, you know. I cannot speak for my mother, but you are my brother and how I treated you was wrong.”

Before Jon can respond, she leaves the room.

It is harder to speak with this Jon, the one convinced she hates him. Before Sansa woke up here, she and Jon were close, not as close as Arya and Jon but their relationship was far better than it was (it was a relationship Sansa treasured, but is now lost).

Sometimes, in the small hours of the night Sansa wonders if this was made just to make her feel worse, to have her family and yet be so far from them.

It’s still odd to see her family alive and well in the waking world (Sansa’s dreams were mostly nightmares but dreams where her family is whole were a small solace), to be able to touch them again.

Sometimes she has to hold back screams when people touch her, even in a different body, she still hates being touched.

She’s in a lesson with Septa Mordane when an idea comes to her, to sew a tapestry of Robb and Grey Wind in battle. She sets her current project aside (a wolf, Lady, on a white background) and promises herself to finish it later.

She picks out red thread first, for Robb’s hair, and then a peach color for his skin, multiple shades of grey and sets to work. It will take a lot of work and patience, but Sansa knows she can do it (after this, she thinks, I’ll do one for Jon and Arya and Bran, maybe even little Rickon once he’s older).

An oathbreaker’s been caught and Father is going out to execute him, along with Robb, Bran, and Jon. Sansa smiles as they ride off and waves them goodbye. They’re going to find the

Direwolf pups and this time, *nothing* is going to happen to Lady. (Sansa will finally have someone she can trust with her wholeheart again.)

While Father and the boys are gone, Sansa works on her tapestry. She'll give it to Robb once Grey Wind is older. After she works on it for an hour or two, Sansa decides to write another letter, this time to someone far less desirable.

Dear LittleFinger,

I know your game. You're going to lose. Jon Arryn will live. And the realm won't be plunged into war.

Remember when you play the Game of Thrones, you win or you die. Baelish, you will most certainly die.

She doesn't bother signing her name, he wouldn't know her anyway (Sansa doesn't want him to know her). She watches Maester Luwin send the raven off this time and then leaves with a sweet smile on her face.

When Father and the boys arrive home, Robb gives her Lady who she accepts with a gleeful smile. "Hello Lady," she greets as she holds the pup close, Lady licks her face in return.

Sansa feels as though a part of her soul has been restored, now that she has Lady once more. "Don't worry," Sansa whispers into the pup's head, "you'll be as much a wolf as you are a lady this time."

Mother tries to get the Direwolves to sleep in the kennels, but Sansa won't stand for it (she won't be parted with Lady again, even for a moment) and her siblings agree, surprised to see Sansa stand up to their mother.

As they begin to head inside, Sansa grabs Jon's sleeve, "Direwolves are South of the Wall, Jon. Don't you see?" She then goes inside the keep as well.

"Have you decided what you'll name your wolves?" Sansa asks as she sits down to break her fast, she sets Lady down to go explore with her siblings.

"Not yet," Bran says, last time Bran took the longest to name his wolf too so Sansa doesn't say anything.

"Nymeria, after the warrior queen!" Arya shouts as she watches Nymeria and Shaggydog play fight.

"Grey Wind," Robb says simply.

Sansa laughs, "Very creative, Robb."

"Hey!"

Sansa rolls her eyes at her brother's antics and then turns to Rickon, "What's your wolf named?"

"Shaggydog!" He giggles which causes Shaggydog to come jump at his feet.

Sansa pets Shaggydog absentmindedly as she ask, "What about you, Jon?"

"Ghost," Jon says.

"Fitting," Sansa grins.

"What about you, Sansa?" Robb asks, though he already knows the answer.

"Her name is Lady," Sansa smiles as she picks her Direwolf up. Arya snorts and says something but Sansa doesn't care.

Sansa sets Lady down in the snow, to let her explore some more so she can pray. Sansa kneels in front of the heart tree and closes her eyes.

"In my last life," she begins in a whisper, "my brother became the Three Eyed Crow, a greenseer with immense power, but must he become that again?" It's a plea to her gods, to Bloodraven, Bran should not bear that burden twice over.

"I know I must fix things, but how? How do I stop the White Walkers? How do I stop the Long Night? How do I save *my family*?" Sansa begs, tears running down her cheeks once again. At this moment, Lady jumps into Sansa's lap.

Sansa opens her eyes to see her little wolf, "I see. Lady is your emissary, my guide. Thank you."

Sansa hugs the Direwolf pup close, "I won't lose you again," she whispers and this time, it's a promise.

Chapter End Notes

This is kind of a filler chapter before the big stuff starts but it did have important information. I hope you liked it!

in death's dreamless sleep

Chapter Summary

When your plans betray you.

Chapter Notes

Back again.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Lady holds a part of Sansa that no one has yet seen, she is wild while prim, harsh while proper, vicious while beautiful. In their last life, Sansa had made sure Lady's wildness was all but flushed out, making the wolf into a picture of herself, but in this life Lady will be deadly as all her siblings and she will not die again.

Sansa holds Lady tight when the nightmares become too much (Lady gives Sansa strength when she needs it most). When she sobs, it is silent. She learned how to cry quietly over the years.

In the mornings all she wants to do is to stay in bed with Lady, but she is a lady and she cannot do that.

This day, she dresses in wool with a silk sash (she would prefer to leave the silk behind but her family might suspect something). Her hair is in a tight plait with ribbons to match her sash.

Sansa's look is that of a girl of one and ten with romantic dreams but her mind is that of a woman grown with a heart of ice. ("Queen of Winter!" The small folk cry as the world freezes over, as Sansa takes her crown with a solemn face.)

Her steps are careful and measured with all the grace of a queen (in this life she would never be Queen in the North, the lady of Winterfell or any other title that was passed to her through death and destruction). Her eyes sweep the room as she enters the hall before she takes her place by her sister's side.

Lady lies down by her feet, waiting eagerly for Sansa to pass her some meat. She slips the direwolf some bacon and sausages when only Arya is looking. She winks at her, knowing Arya will keep this to herself for as long it suits her.

She is excused from the table when her plate is clean. As she leaves the hall, she catches Jon's eye for a split second before she hurries outdoors.

The snow is freshly fallen, crisp and white. Lady runs through the snow with glee, Sansa giggles as she watches the pup fall on her face.

She picks Lady up with a gentle hand, carefully brushing off soft snow from her snout. She holds the pup against her chest as she retreats to the Godswood.

The Godswood was her safe haven in King's Landing and she still treasures it now that she is home. She lets Lady play in the snow as she kneels before the heart tree, "Please guide me," she asks the nameless gods of the North for she is certain she met one at the end of her last life.

"Why do I live again?" She asks, "I cannot bare for my family to die before my eyes again." Tears well up in her eyes and she blinks rapidly to make them go away. "Surely Jon or Bran or even Arya was better suited for this. I am the least remarkable of my siblings, I truly do not measure up to them. To the true king that was Jon. To the warrior that Arya became. To Bran, the *Three Eyed Crow* . To Rickon, a Stark raised wild. I may be smart but Bran knows all.

"Perhaps the Neverborn did not speak for you but I simply cannot believe that! With that power, it must be connected to you somehow." Sansa's face is streaked with tears when she stands, her eyes are undoubtedly puffy and red.

"Lady, come!" She says weakly, cheering up a bit as the pup lopes over to her. She wipes her eyes dry and picks up the ends of her dress. She puts on a blank face.

She's carefully sewing Robb's brandished sword into his tapestry when Jeyne runs in the room, red faced. She's breathing heavily and her long brown hair is flying free. "Sansa!" She yells, "The king is here!"

Sansa freezes, carefully lowering her needle. "The king?" She asks, trying not to panic. (Jon Arryn must be dead for that is the only reason the king will come so far North.)

Sansa stands, placing her tapestry to the side. She stands and brushes off her skirts, "Well, I must be ready to greet him beside my father."

She has to find Jon and retrieve the knife he had commissioned for her. "Jeyne," she smiles weakly, "you must find your father as well." Jeyne smiles and then goes off to find her father. Sansa clutches at her chest and tries to breathe. She closes her eyes and imagines Joffrey's dying breath and then *breathes* .

She is walking fast in the soft grey slippers her mother had gifted her, a painfully fake smile graces her lips,

(I was too late , Sansa thinks, I arrived too late to save Jon Arryn and for that, the realm will suffer.)

She slips away into Jon's room, startling the man. "Jon, is my dagger ready?" She asks, some of her desperation seeping into her voice.

"It's not pretty," Jon says uncertainly, holding out a plain dagger hilt out.

She accepts it gratefully, "That matters not." She rubs her thumb against the hilt.

"Thank you, Jon."

She straps the dagger to her thigh so that it's always there. She lets her plait out so that her hair falls free (for her to hide behind, perhaps).

She sheds the slippers and instead wears her riding boots, just in case she has to run.

She soon joins the rest of her family outside, standing next to Robb and Arya. She forces herself to relax, carefully clasping her hands together.

A sea of gold and silver flows through the gates of Winterfell, all under the Baratheon's crowned stag. Sansa recognized the king, riding tall. He was flanked by two white knights of the Kingsguard. (They were not the knights of the songs Sansa used to love so much, instead corrupt men who beat little girls at the behest of their king.)

The golden queen, Cersei Lannister, stepped down from the wheelhouse with her children behind her. Sansa's flinched invisibly at the sight of Joffrey but no one paid her any mind.

When her father knelt to kiss Cersei's ring, Sansa clenches her fists. Her father was a thousand times more honorable than Cersei could ever hope to be.

When King Robert asks Father to show him to the crypts, Sansa takes that as her queue to leave. "I am sorry, my queen," she says with a curtsy, "but I am feeling sick so I must retire, if you allow that."

Cersei glances at her for a second before looking away, "Yes, yes." She waves her hand, dismissing Sansa.

Sansa locks herself in her room with Lady, resolving to work on her tapestry. She sews the sword into Robb's hand as Lady soundly sleeps in her lap.

She begins to sew Grey Wind at Robb's side with a careful hand. He is silver and gray with snow white fangs. He's not as big as Ghost would one day become but Sansa hadn't gotten to see him fully grown (just like Lady).

She sews half of Grey Wind's body before her fingers begin to hurt. She sets her project to the side and lays down, carefully curling around Lady.

She falls asleep at some point, waking up with Lady laying against her chest.

She slips away from her bed, leaving Lady asleep. She puts on her slippers, carefully opening her door so that Lady doesn't wake up.

She finds her way to the Lord's solar, hoping that the king isn't in there with Father. She pushes open the door to see her father sitting alone. "Sansa?" He asks, looking up from his reports.

"Father," she greets as she enters the room. She goes over to sit with her father, encircling her arms around her father.

"Sansa, are you okay?" He asks, concern evident on his face.

Even as a child, she knew that Joffrey was cruel but she had chosen to ignore that because he was her betrothed and she thought she had to spend her life with him, so she takes in a deep breathe, "Father, please, don't betroth me to Joffrey. He's cruel."

Father sighs, stroking Sansa's hair. "I'll try my best, Sansa, but it is what our king demands."

He holds her close and Sansa feel comfort in the first time in years, "I love you," she whispers.

Chapter End Notes

So Sansa arrived too late to save Jon Arryn and we have seen the first ripples Sansa being back in this time has caused (of which we will see later). Thanks for reading!

lay me down in a bed of roses, sink me in the river at dawn

Chapter Summary

Sansa tells Rickon a story.

Chapter Notes

Chapter title is from "If I Die Young" by The Band Perry.

So it's been awhile, but I promise I'm still invested in this story.

TW for mentions of Ramsay and what he did.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sansa wishes she were Alayne Stone once more for a bastard would never be allowed to treat with the king.

She smiles prettily as she offers Joffrey her arm, taking his arm in soft grip. The smile comes easily, she simply imagines taking her dagger from where its strapped to her thigh and *cutting*. She imagines her dagger digging into his throat, so he chokes on his blood, begging for her help but she just keeps smiling. A gurgle, a whimper, really, comes out and perhaps it's cruel that she digs her knife into his stomach but she has fed men to their own starving dogs so perhaps it's a mercy. "Cry your last, my prince," she would say, "this is the least of what you deserve." She would not watch breathe his last, for what he truly fears is being utterly alone so he must die as such.

Would she reveal her fantasy? No. If her lady mother heard tell of it, she would certainly be sent off to the Silent Sisters. Women were not allowed to have violent tendencies without being labeled mad or being trained out of it.

Her smile thins, til it's just a ghost of a thing. Joffrey's smile is large and painfully fake, plasticne with glassy eyes. His eyes are filled with bloodlust, her skin itches where their skin meets. She wants to break away, run.

Sansa reminds herself that she's meant to be a simple girl, obsessed with becoming queen and the South. Her smiles widen, softens. She walks out with pride, arm lightly looped through Joffrey's.

Sansa trains her eyes ahead, gracefully letting her prince go as she reaches the table and sitting with perfect poise. The seating plan had been changed, Sansa now sat at the end of the

table with Arya at her side.

Joffrey wrinkled his nose at not being able to sit next to Sansa, having to sit next to Robb instead.

The Hall is filled with sounds of revelry, talking and laughing. Sansa eats quietly, careful not to make eye contact with Joffrey. She leaves her wine glass, knowing it would just cloud her judgement.

King Robert's laugh booms across the hall, giving Sansa cover to slip away. She takes her youngest brother in her arms; Rickon gleefully curls into her, grateful for the attention.

The baby giggles, tugging at his sister's fire red hair. She tickles the babe's stomach as she walks, her smile is gentle, genuine unlike so many of her recent smiles. Her baby brother lets her hair go, instead taking her hand and chewing on her fingers. She laughs, clear and sweet (oh, how to laugh again with her brother).

Sansa takes Rickon to his nursery first, freeing her hand from her brother's grip and picking up little Shaggydog. The inky, black pup blinks his bright green eyes open, looking up at her with sleepy eyes.

She walks to her room, setting Shaggydog down next to Lady and Rickon down on her bed. "My wild little brother," she says sadly, caressing his little cheek.

"Saa!" He says, crawling over to sit in her lap. She wraps her arms around his belly, resting her chin on his shoulder.

"Would you like a story?" She asks, she knows he most likely does but she asks anyway.

"Stowy!" He cheers, turning around to look at her.

She smiles and softly begins, "There was once a little boy, who grew up with five siblings, three brothers and two sisters. His siblings slowly left him even though they didn't want too, his sisters were taken to the capital, one to marry a horrid prince and one to learn to how to fight. His brother, who turned out to actually be his aunt's son, left to serve the realm on the Wall, though he didn't know how many he'd be protecting while serving. His eldest brother suddenly became Lord and Warden of the North after his father's sudden death, he went to war after his father's death but someone he thought he could trust betrayed him so both he and his mother died. And his last brother, the closest to him in age left to become something more, something not human..." She pauses, wiping away stray tears. "He himself became a wild thing, son of the Free Folk and the Skargosi. He was a little king, too small for his crown."

She cards her fingers through Rickon's wild curls, "His bannermen were unsure of how he would rule. He was raised on the edge of their realm, after all, where things are different. However, they could not deny he was the trueborn brother of their last king. He was their only choice, lest they put a Targaryen on their Winter Throne.

“But then a bastard born girl from the Vale came calling to White Harbour, where the little king was being fostered there since his discovery. The girl washed away north-dark dye to reveal fire red hair, she was the little king’s sister.”

Rickon leans against Sansa, tired after a long day but she needs to tell someone this story, her story, even if he would forget. “She had disappeared after being accused of murdering a king, the realm thought she was dead and lost all hope in their young lady’s return. However, she hadn’t been killed, she had been stolen away by a wicked man. You see, she reminded him of her mother, a woman he was obsessively in love with. The girl’s mother had been killed by her brother’s side, you see, though that would not be the end of the mother’s story. The Wicked Man had used dyes to disguise her as his daughter, a bastard from a nameless mother.

“However, the man’s plans turned on him as the Lords of the Vale took her in, naming her the Lady of the Eyrie as their young lord got sicker and sicker. She nursed the boy, trying to save him from the Wicked Man’s poison. His control over her fell away and she was able to save the young lord and return the Eyrie to him. She then went North, to her brother, to her king.

“The Lords of the North made her the Queen Regent as her brother grew and she took her crown with a heavy heart. She made a wondrous queen, she loved the small folk and they loved her.

“Her brother, the little king, abdicated the Winter Throne to her for he was too wild to stay put and rule.”

Rickon’s breath had slowed, he sleeps against Sansa’s side. She smiles down at the boy, gathering him up in her arms, careful not to jostle him. She opens the door carefully and steps into the hall, taking Rickon to his nursery. She lays him down carefully in his bed, he sleeps on soundly.

Sansa steps out of the nursery, leaving the door open just a crack.

“That story wasn’t one Old Nan used to tell us,” Arya says, stepping out of the shadows.

Sansa smiles, thin and demure, “You don’t think I can’t come up with stories of my own, sister?”

Arya sniffs, “I’m sure you could, but the stories you would come up with would be happy stories with a beautiful end. There was no end to the story you told Rickon.”

Sansa brushes her hair back behind her ear, “I didn’t want to give him nightmares.” The words are a perfectly practiced lie, though she hasn’t spoken them in years, they come out as easily as breathing.

“The story was that of a little boy losing his entire family, save one of his sisters,” Arya deadpans.

“Yes, well,” Sansa says, “the story only gets more frightening as it goes on.”

Arya takes a step towards her sister, “Tell me.”

And so, Sansa does.

Sansa dreams of Jeyne, the one she found at Winterfell, broken and scared.

The shrinking violet of her adulthood was nothing like the stubborn girl she had shared her childhood with. Jeyne had become a scarred woman because of Ramsay Bolton, he aged her well past her years.

Jon had helped her retake Winterfell, but it had been Jeyne and she who took Ramsay's life. They had clung to each other as they stood outside the kennels, watching as Ramsay's own dogs took his life.

Jeyne had sobbed heavily in Sansa's arms, holding onto her friend tightly. Sansa knew it was for fear that she would wake up and Sansa would be gone and she'd still be in Ramsay's hold.

They had slept in each others arms like they were little girls again. (Sansa will not let Jeyne become that broken woman once more, no matter what.)

Sansa rises easily despite the pounding in her head. She and Arya had stayed up into the small hours, talking about Sansa's other life. Thankfully, Arya believed her and swore not to tell anyone.

Still, Sansa dresses in wool and brushes her hair easily.

Jeyne opens the door to her room, slipping inside and closing it silently.

She smiles as she takes Sansa's hand in hers. Softly, she presses her lips against Sansa's in a gentle kiss. (Had she and Jeyne been like this last time as well? She can't remember.)

It's easy for Sansa to push Jeyne back, to let go of her hand, easier than she would have thought at least. "Jeyne, we can't be like that anymore," she says firmly.

Jeyne tilts her head to the side, confusion and hurt plain to see on her face, "What do you mean, Sansa?"

"I'm to marry a prince," she says apologetically, "I cannot be stealing kisses from someone else... it'd be adultery, wouldn't it?"

Jeyne frowns, "Men are allowed to do it, so why shouldn't we?" She tries to catch Sansa's hand again but Sansa takes a step back.

"Jeyne, we have to stop."

(Sansa watches as Jeyne's world shatters. It's all her fault.)

“I love you, Sansa,” Jeyne says with tears in her eyes before she slams the door open and takes off running.

Chapter End Notes

There's some Sansa/Jeyne in this chapter, though it will be unrequited for now. Sansa is, in her mind, a fully grown adult and Jeyne is just a child, I may come back to it when they're both adults but I'm not sure.

Also, how would you feel about another pov next chapter? I'm thinking of doing one of three people.

but never doubt i love

Chapter Summary

Telling stories, revealing secrets.

Chapter Notes

Arya's POV for this chapter but the last half is Sansa!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Arya isn't sure why she follows Sansa, perhaps she's curious why she left the feast where as months ago she would have demanded that it go on as long she wanted. She makes a game out of it, following behind her sister far enough that she won't notice and yet close enough that she can still hear her sister's quiet mumblings to Rickon.

Arya watches as she stops by the nursery to bring Shaggydog along. Arya feels a pang, she hadn't known Shaggydog would be all alone, she had thought he'd be with Lady like how she left Nymeria with Ghost and Grey Wind. Shaggydog is so tiny in her arms when compared to Rickon. It's hard to believe one day he'll grow taller than a horse.

Sansa goes to her room next, forgetting to close the door. She sets Shaggydog and Rickon down on the bed and then bends down for Lady. The wolf trots over to her, nuzzling her head into Sansa when she picks her up.

Sansa giggles and sets Lady down on the bed next Rickon and Shaggydog. She crawls onto the bed next, giving Arya a moment to sit down on the cold ground to listen to whatever Sansa has to say. "My wild little brother," Sansa sighs while she caresses his cheek. There's a sadness to it, one Arya has never seen Sansa have before.

"Saa!" Rickon shrieks, climbing into their older sister's lap. Sansa wraps her arms around the baby and rests her chin on his shoulder.

"Would you like a story?" She asks as Shaggydog and Lady curl up on either side of her. It's odd to see Sansa like this but Arya likes it, it's different than her usual mean self.

"Stowy!" Rickon cheers, looking up into their sister's bright blue eyes with his own.

Sansa smiles slightly, it's different than her usual smile, it's soft and sweet and *genuine*. It's at this moment that Arya realizes she hasn't seen her sister truly smile in *weeks*. Sansa begins her tale softly, Arya leans against the wall and prepares to hear one of Old Nan's tales.

The story that comes out of Sansa's mouth is anything but one of Old Nan's tales.

The story Sansa tells is full of death but most terrifyingly, the characters of the tale seem to represent *their* family. The sisters were Sansa and herself, she has no doubt. She speaks of Jon next, saying he is actually their cousin instead of their brother. Sansa continues her tale with Robb, speaking of how he became a king after their father's death and how he was betrayed, how he and their mother died. Arya freezes when she hears of Bran, of how he became something not human in the tale. And then Sansa speaks of Rickon himself, she says he becomes the son of the Free Folk and the Skargosi together and how he became Robb's successor. She speaks of Rickon's bannermen and their uncertainty to have a wild thing as their king and then of how their only other choice was a Targaryen.

And she tells of a bastard girl, secretly Sansa Stark, and how she was stolen away by a wicked man. Arya can feel Sansa's anger as she speaks of the man and how he was obsessed with their mother. Sansa's anger spreads into Arya, even as she continues on to how she became Rickon's Queen Regent as he grew and how he abdicated the throne to her.

Sansa gathers Rickon in her arms and stands, giving Arya just enough time to hide in the shadows. She follows Sansa to the nursery, watching as she lays their baby brother down to rest. She smiles at the little one, pressing a kiss against his head.

She leaves the nursery, leaving the slightly open.

Arya seizes her chance. "That story wasn't one Old Nan used to tell us." She steps into Sansa's view, truly looking at her sister for the first time that night.

Sansa's smile is thin. "You don't think I can come up with stories of my own, sister?" *Sister*, she calls Arya which is strange by itself but it's said with a certain tone that reveals sadness. Arya needs to know why.

Arya sniffs and tilts her head up towards her sister, "I'm sure you could, but the stories you would come up with would be happy stories with a beautiful end. There was no end to the story you told Rickon." It's not a lie or a stretch of the truth. Sansa probably could come up with stories as beautiful as the songs she loves loved to listen to and Sansa hates to leave things unfinished.

And yet, Sansa smiles slightly and brushes her hair behind her ear. "I didn't want to give him nightmares." The words make Arya stop, freeze, and *think*.

"The story was that of a little boy losing his entire family, save one of his sisters," she says it in a deadpan, blunt and uncaring but secretly, she's desperately trying to figure out what Sansa means.

"Yes, well," Sansa says stiffly, "the story only gets more frightening as it goes on." There is a sense of finality in her words, crushing and absolute.

Arya takes a step forward, she needs to know what Sansa hides, even if it will break her. "Tell me."

They return to Sansa's room and sit on her bed. Sansa looks down at her hand, fidgeting as if she weren't the girl their mother raised. "Let's say this is the story of our family," Sansa says slowly, "centuries after Brandon the Builder, Brandon the Breaker, and Torrhen Stark bent the knee. Lyarra Stark is years dead and so is Rickard. Brandon and Lyanna are dead in the South while Eddard, Ned, and Benjen live in the North, as they were meant to."

"Catelyn Tully is now Catelyn Stark." Sansa's face is stone where the mention of their mother should have softened it. "She is the mother to five where as her husband is father to six. Robb, Jon, Sansa, Arya, Bran, and Rickon. And when King Robert comes calling, telling Ned that he's to become his hand, he brings his daughters south with him."

"Robb is left to rule their household with Catelyn's counsel. Jon knows he is unwelcome in a household without his father, where his sibling's mother's rule is absolute, so he leaves. Journeys for the Wall with his uncle Benjen. There he becomes a brother of the Night's Watch." Arya frowns furrowing her brows, she has never wanted Jon to go to the Wall. She just wants him to remain with them, as her brother.

"Jon becomes many things as a member of the Night's Watch. He becomes a warrior, a lover, a commander, and so much more. He'll come into his own and yes, he will experience great hardships but they will only make him grow in strength." Sansa smiles at her sister, taking Arya's hand in hers. It's surprising, Sansa had never been one to show affection to her.

Arya coughs and looks away, "What about you? You said we went South but what happened there?"

Sansa's smile grows sad, "Sansa and Arya go South with Ned. The journey is long and on it, Lady dies. Nymeria had bitten the prince and ran, Cersei demanded Lady's death if she could not have Nymeria's." Sansa wipes her unfallen tears away, she ignores whatever Arya starts to say. "When they reach the capital, Ned has a present for Arya. The former First Sword Of Braavos is to be her sword fighting teacher and Arya adores him. He's quick witted and smart, even if it's not in the conventional sense."

"A teacher?" Arya asks, curious and delighted. Sansa forgets, sometimes, that this Arya is still a child and not the hardened assassin she grew up to be.

"Yes," Sansa smiles, "his name is Syrio Forel."

"Sansa isn't dumb. She knows who Prince Joffrey is, how cruel he is and how the evil that dwells in his soul. But she knows she'll have to spend the rest of her life with him so she ignores all the signs. She knows that being on his good side is so much better than being on his bad side so she doesn't call him out. She ignores and ignores and it almost gets her killed."

"They cut off Eddard Stark's head -" Arya sucks in a breath and balls up her fists. "- and the North goes to war. Arya escapes but Sansa, she's their hostage. Nothing more than a pawn in the game of thrones."

"Arya goes East, to Braavos, and Sansa remains. Until a man, a wicked, evil man, steals her away on Joffrey's wedding day. He poisoned the prince's wine and Sansa is blamed for it."

Her words are light, she's far off in that other world. She shakes her head and smiles, "That's enough for one night, yes?"

Arya shakes her head, "Sansa, I need to know the rest."

Sansa smile thins, "Get out, Arya." Her voice is cold and commanding. It reminds Arya of their mother.

She doesn't need to be told a third time.

"Something is different about Sansa," Arya says as she marches into her father's solar. Sansa still hasn't risen despite it being nearly midmorning. Her siblings follow her inside, even little Rickon is in Robb's arms.

"What do you mean, Arya?" Mother asks and Arya can't tell if she genuinely wants to know or if she's just humoring her.

"She's acting *weird*," Arya says, "just last night she told Rickon a story of our family where we all *die* except for them."

"She made me commission her a dagger," Jon mumbles, making everyone look at him.

Catelyn's gaze is piercing as she asks, "And *why* would you grant such a request?" Her voice is painfully cold, emotionless.

"She *begged* me for it," Jon says, voice barely controlled. "She's afraid of something too, beyond the Wall. I can't tell if it's because of the Wildling raids or if Old Nan's stories got to her."

"I'm worried for her too," Father admits slowly, "she asked me to break her betrothal to Joffrey."

They all look over to Father grimly.

"If Sansa wants to break her betrothal, something must be very wrong. All she wants is to be queen," Robb says, voice hard.

Sansa sits back against her bed. She hates that she made Jeyne upset but that's what is best. This Jeyne is just a child and she is a woman grown, in her mind at least.

She looks down at Lady, "What are we going to do?"

Sansa sighs as Lady rolls onto her back. She pats Lady on her stomach, smiling slightly. "I love you too," she tells the little direwolf.

Sansa ties her hair up into a knot and dresses herself in a black dress. It is not a day of mourning but it feels like it should be so she dresses as such. She pinches her cheeks so they look flushed and steps out of her room.

She will not deal with Joffrey or Cersei today. She will not deal with anyone today.

Sansa lights a candle and walks silently down to the crypts. She will mourn those whose statues are displayed and those who never got a chance equally.

The crypts frightened her as a child but now, they are a comfort. They survived despite everything, they lived on past the fires that razed Winterfell and they will survive until the end of time.

Sansa sets the candle by Lyanna's feet. She looks up at her aunt, who looks so much like Arya. They called Arya Lyanna's second coming in her first life and Sansa doesn't doubt that they are wrong. Sansa removes the Winter Roses from Lyanna's hand, knowing that she wouldn't have wanted the gesture from Robert.

"Dear Aunt," Sansa says sadly, wishing she could have known Lyanna. She smiles fondly as she remembers the tale of The Knight Of The Laughing Tree, Lyanna protected her own and so will Sansa.

Sansa picks up her candle and steps back, letting the view of Lyanna, Brandon, and Rickard fill her sight. "A family I have never known and yet, a family I cherish."

Sansa sits down and begins to tell the family she never knew the story of their son and brother and his own children. A tale that will not be repeated.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you aren't confused about the last part of Arya's POV. She's concerned for her sister, very much so. Imagine if your sibling told you a story where your whole family died and believed it. Arya loves her sister and believes this is what is best for her.

even the skies scream

Chapter Summary

Sansa thinks, a lot.

Chapter Notes

title is from "storms are wonderful" by nikita gill

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sansa brushes her skirts, more out of instinct than want. Her knees hurt after sitting on them and she feels a brief flash of regret for sitting like that, but it isn't anything serious. She ascends the stairs out of the Crypts as quietly as she can, blowing out her candle and setting it down on the first step. She doesn't say goodbye to the dead, silently praying that they're still watching.

The guards nod at her as she leaves the Crypts, she smiles politely at them. She doesn't remember their names, their features unfamiliar but she knows she knows these men. Sansa had always thought her memory sound, but here in the face of two ordinary people, she finds herself doubting. Before she can stop herself, she is asking, "What are your names?"

The one on the right, the younger man with a large scar on his jaw, opens his mouth and says, "Wil, my lady." He bows slightly as he says it, unused to the attention of one of his 'betters'. (Oh, how that word infuriates Sansa - the luck of one's birth does not lend to them being better. Often the opposite is true, she's found.)

The one on the left, the older one with weather-hardened skin, shifts. "My name is Marin, my lady," he says, the beginning of a question forming on his lips before he thinks better.

Sansa nods, a little too sharply, and leaves. She can feel her own frustration building, it is harsh but she cannot get attached to random people. She needs to ensure *her* people survive, she cannot worry for everyone. A larger part of her than she'd like to admit thinks: *But what about them? The common people have no one to look out for them if you do not.*

A terrible guilt twists at her gut. She knows it's mostly irrational, she cannot save everyone but she wants to *try*.

Uncle Benjen looks very much like her father, his face is thinner and body more wiry but they are undoubtedly brothers. His facial hair is barely above stubble, not yet a beard. His grey eyes are hard and steely, used to those true Northern winters. He'd be handsome, Sansa would guess if the years of malnutrition the Watch had caused hadn't seemed to age him.

As she looks at him, Sansa wonders what made him decide to join the Night's Watch. Was it the death of Lyanna? Or was her death just the catalyst? She knows not and she almost considers asking, but she restrains herself.

"Uncle," she greets, sitting down next to him as he watches Jon and Robb spar.

Benjen looks at her, surprised. They never interacted much in her previous life. She's not entirely sure why. "Sansa, good to see you," he says and his voice is soft like Father's, it surprises her. She hadn't known she'd forgotten what he sounded like, though it is inevitable since he disappeared soon after the King's Visit.

"I heard," Sansa starts, lacing her fingers together, "that the Wilding raids are going to increase soon. Something about a Rayder? I'm not entirely sure." She tries not to sound too diplomatic, she's just a child after all.

Benjen sighs, "Yes, the Wildlings have united behind a king. There's a first time for everything, right?"

"How odd," Sansa says, "I wonder what's made them so afraid as to unite under one leader?"

Benjen gives her a look, "I hadn't thought of them being afraid, not sure I could understand it either. What is it about now that is so special?" He has a faraway look in his eye.

"Old Nan says that under the ice, wights hibernate. Waiting for their leaders to awake so that they can create an eternal night. Maybe they're waking up?" The words sound stupid coming out of her mouth, ignorant, and she *knows* them to be true. She can't imagine what they sound like to Benjen, the experienced ranger and warrior.

Benjen chuckles, "Don't believe everything Old Nan tells you, Sansa." He ruffles her hair as he moves to get up, something else catching his attention.

Sansa smiles, "Just keep an eye out there. You never know what's true and what's fiction."

Sansa grabs Bran's arm as he begins to climb up the side of a building, a disappointed look on her face. "Mother told you not to climb while the King is here," she tells him, pulling him away from the wall. Bran glares up at her, blue eyes alight with anger. It is not so terrible, for him to be mad at her if it means he will get to be a little boy in this life.

Bran mumbles something under his breath but Sansa doesn't catch it. She takes his hand in hers and begins to walk, with him following slightly behind. Once they're alone, Sansa drops his hands and grabs the sides of his face. At one and ten, she is over a head taller than him and it is easy to make eye contact.

"Life is not a song, Bran, and you are not yet a knight." Her voice is stern, trying to emulate their lady mother as she often did in her previous life. "If you fall, you will be injured." He tries to pull away, pushing her back but Sansa is stronger than he is, as she is four years his senior. "And there are some, who would push you if they were to see you in their window."

She lets him go then, he pulls back with wide eyes - red hair almost standing on end. "Sansa?" He asks, voice small and she feels a pang - her brother is afraid of her right now. "What do you mean?"

Sansa sighs and kneels, she brushes Bran's hair out of his eyes and smiles sadly. "Not all people are as valiant and kind as heroes in the songs, they rarely are. If you were to climb up into a window and see something secret, they might just kill you, a little boy, for it." It's harsh, she knows, but she needs to get her point across. "Now, you have to promise me not climb while the king holds Winterfell."

Bran nods, bangs falling into his eyes. "I promise," he whispers. Sansa should feel bad and in some ways, she does, but hurt feelings aren't as important as Bran's life.

Sansa's lips quirk up and she pats his cheek, "Go play now."

It is hard to look at her father. When she looks at him, she remembers him begging her to look away and Joffrey making him stare at his head on a pike, eyes eaten by crows and skin rotting. It is much the same for her mother, though she was not completely dead when she encountered her as Lady Stoneheart. She cannot rid her mind of Lady Stoneheart's slow rasping breaths, she doesn't think she ever will.

Her family either doesn't notice or decide not to comment on her refusal to look at either of her parents. Sansa had gotten good at looking at people without truly seeing them in her last life, she hopes it carried over.

Her muscle memory is gone, however little of that there was. She finds herself not knowing what to do with her hands, not satisfied with stillness. She finds her mind racing. In all honesty, she does not know what to do. Yes, she must dispose of Petyr Baelish. She must get Cersei and Tywin's hands away from the throne. But she needs to focus on pressing concerns right now, namely making sure her father lives.

Maybe she could find a way to get Robert to choose someone else as his Hand? There's no one he'd trust as much as her father but Ned Stark cannot leave the North again. None of her family can. If they were needed elsewhere, she would be the one to go. Once, she had

promised never to leave the North again, but if it means her family never has to leave? She'd go South in a heartbeat.

She gets knocked out of her thoughts as a pale hand grabs her. Joffrey is staring at her, blue eyes shining. "You've been avoiding me," he says, face only slightly red from anger.

"You must be imaging that, my prince. I would never avoid you, you are too be my husband. Could it be that you misinterpreted my actions?" There's a subtle dig in there, one that he might not notice, about his intelligence. As similar in looks Joffrey is to his parents, he hadn't inherited his mother's brains or even his father's.

His lips curl, "You are to be my queen, should we not get to know each other?" As much as Sansa would like to deny, she knows she can't refuse.

"Of course," she says and smiles, "what would you like to do?"

Chapter End Notes

okok im sorry it's been so long! i'm trying very hard to graduate and i am verrry behind lmao. life kept getting in the way, yknow? sorry it's not super long - i'm gonna try and make the future chapters longer.

on a story note, i've been thinking a lot about sansa and her happy ending in this - her dream was always to fall in love. i think she'll have a romance eventually, once she's older. right now i'm thinking margaery, daenerys, aegon (young griff), or maybe theon. idk how i feel about how i wrote bran,, it feels kinda wrong. also unimportant but i headcanon benjen as aro/ace.

i'm wasted, losing time (i'm a foolish, fragile spine)

Chapter Summary

a chapter about saying goodbye.

Chapter Notes

the title is from smother by daughter.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Theon is a lanky boy, having almost completely outgrown the gangliness of his youth. His hair is a dark brown but it's easy for Sansa to imagine it sun-bleached blonde as if he were in the Iron Islands. She doesn't know why she imagines Theon as happy there, knowing everything she does.

Looking at him is like stepping into a memory - different than her father and mother, for Theon's vast transformation was not the result of death, but rather a twisted man sculpting him into a memory of his own.

Her memories of Theon are of him chasing skirts and shooting arrows. She never knew much about the boy besides that, his secrets were only for him and Robb.

Sansa had wondered after they'd retaken Winterfell if Theon first saw Robb in her features before he had remembered that Robb was dead. She had seen his eyes widen in some kind of wonder when they reunited but it soon faded. It's not a question in her mind - she and Robb had always resembled each other the most of their siblings. They had inherited their mother's genes strongly, only inheriting their father's height. Robb and she had been mistaken for twins a couple of times, mostly by the Smallfolk.

Sansa looks at the side of Theon's face, where his usual roguish smile was absent, in its place is an almost thoughtful expression. He doesn't notice her as she approaches him, in this quiet part of Winterfell. Theon's leaning back, his head resting against the smooth stone wall.

The sound of her shoes on stone makes a tapping sound that sounds infinitely louder than it should but Theon remains in his own little world. Sansa sits down next to him, not wanting to disturb whatever peace he has found.

"I'm going to miss you." Her voice sounds small, so awfully young. It's a sharp contrast to the voice in her head.

Theon glances at her, gaze unbelieving. He gives her one of his confident grins, "Missing me, in the capital? I think you'll be much too busy being the prince's betrothed."

Sansa sighs, "I don't think I want to marry him." It's different than telling her father, less nerve wracking. This isn't the Theon she knows, isn't the broken boy held captive by Ramsay Bolton, but she trusts him anyway. She knows her Theon isn't a good man, he killed children for his own ends, and this Theon might very well do the same but she has already forgiven him and will again. She should feel guilt for the thought but she can't fool herself, not again.

Theon smiles his crooked smile, "Then you have to convince him he doesn't want to marry you."

"I don't know how that would work," she says, "he doesn't really like when I do anything."

Theon raises his eyebrow, "Seems like the prince can't see what's in front of him."

"I won't argue with that," Sansa laughs.

This moment stills, a reflection of what could have been - Sansa struck upon by longing, an overwhelming loneliness she cannot seem to escape - and breaks. Theon is drawing back in on himself and what could she have possibly done wrong?

Sansa coughs, loud and awkward like she always is - and tries to recover as her hand and Theon's touch briefly - hands recoiling as if they've been trapped.

Sansa has always been stupid, even when she is constantly aware. She needs to recover while Theon looks away, to softly reject whatever moment of peace and serenity they should have.

Sansa speaks before Theon can, cutting him off in an attempt to control whatever this is. "Right," Sansa says, high and reedy. "Goodbye."

And she runs.

Jon's in the Godswood, when she next looks for him. It strikes her, how very much he looks like their father. Lyana's genes run strong within him, stronger than her father's genes run in her. It's terribly odd that four out of five of Eddard Stark's true children had inherited their mother's look, with red hair as rare as it is. Lyarra, her grandmother, had probably had red hair, just as she did but her paternal grandparents were rarely spoken about. The wildlings had considered red hair special, some sort of gift from their nameless gods - she smiles ruefully, perhaps the Stark's red hair was an apology for what happened and what was to come.

She stands beside Jon, silently observing the Heart Tree. She has so many things to say, after everything that went unsaid in their last life. Were she a braver woman, she would take his hand and confess the secret their father had kept from him.

Sadly, Sansa cannot risk unknown factors like telling him now, when he's just a boy and so, so foolish.

"I'm leaving today," Sansa says, almost trying to memorize each small detail of the Heart Tree.

Jon doesn't look at her, face as smooth as marble, as silent as Ghost.

"Be careful at the watch," she says.

It would be such a disappointing farwell so Sansa bids adieu to herself and her shame and lets herself throw herself upon Jon, willing him to know she loves him and she regrets but this is the best she can do at the moment. Begs him to see this will not be the last time they see each other.

And Jon Snow, in turn, wraps his arms around Sansa Stark in a way that simply says 'goodbye for now' in something they can only hope to comprehend.

"Now," Catelyn says as she kneels in front of her girls, "I want you two to look out for each other. *Family* can survive anything as long as they stick together. " She smiles and tucks a lock of Arya's hair behind her ear. "Do you remember what your father says?"

"When the snows fall and the white winds blow, the lone wolf dies, but the pack survives," Sansa says, a knot forming in her throat.

"Good, good," Catelyn says, patting Sansa's head soothingly. She pulls them both in for a hug, "I am going to miss you both so much." She kisses them both on the forehead.

"Now, Bran?" As soon as she says that, Bran leaps up from where he is waiting and rushes into their mother's arms. He was waiting for their mother to give her his own goodbye.

"My sweet boy," Catelyn coos, wrapping Bran up in her arms.

Sweet Bran had heeded her warning, though she sensed it was more out of some sort of fear of her than any belief in what she said.

Sansa is following after Arya and Bran as they rush off to join the King's Parade but Catelyn places her hand on her arm. "Take care of them, will you?" She asks, "You'll be spending more time with them than your father."

Sansa inclines her head, agreeing with her mother.

She can only feel dread as she descends down the stairs to her fate. Could it be called a gallows walk, she wonders? Her father had no idea he had been walking to his own death.

Well, let it not be said that Sansa Stark didn't go out with her head held high.

Chapter End Notes

do you ever feel so full of love you feel like you can weather anything, no matter how hard it gets?

i wouldn't say im in a bad place, im living and working and existing trying to get through this weird existence that is life. it's fucking painful but it might be worth it.

pls don't criticize this, it's ultimately a labour of love despite everything. love yall!

End Notes

The Neverborn is mentioned in early drafts of A Game of Thrones, even being in the original description and has been speculated about so I thought I'd use it. I'm not sure if it will appear in ASOIAF, or if it will be as portrayed, but I wanted to have a reason for her to go back and I'll explain it more in coming chapters. Please tell me if you're confused!

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