

Klukas & Jola (Richard Madden&Kelly Reilly)

- Some would say that their souls were made of ice that is duty, that there is no room for feelings in matters of war. Then there are some who would say their souls are so intertwined that they cannot resist meeting one another for in their cores they are one and the same and as such, life will never let them truly discover each other.

Such were the paths of Young Chrobatian Knez and the Warrior Queen of Avars, for two of them shared between them an understanding; an understanding of what could be and could never be for people come first, family comes first and each of them would choose it over anything else, no matter the cost. For home is where your people are.

The king and queen shared same burdens, same choices weighed down their shoulders and when times of peace finally arrived, no matter how short lived it turned out to be, they found comfort in each other. It was not love, not really, but an understanding. Their souls knew one another and if it was a different time, different them, they might have been friends.

Why do you fight queen Jola asked. Klukas turned away from the window, finally looking at her. The Great Kagan and Warrior Queen, he thought, her eyes older than her years and her hair glowing softly in the light of the fireplace. For home and family, he replied. For the people I protect. He paused for a moment, listening to fire crackling. He sighed. For them... I would give my final breath. Jola could hear the silent promise in his words, feel the heaviness and toll it took on his soul for her soul was burdened with the same feeling. She nodded. Now you know my answer to your request.

Gavran & Buga (Kieran Brew&Millie Brady)

- Gavran joined the Seven's troops and advanced in ranks fairly quickly, bringing many victories and gaining Klukas' favour. Buga did not share her brother's opinion for he was a stranger, something unknown and unpredictable. Something dangerous. He took everything as it came, not spending too much time overthinking things or feelings. Buga was weary and kept a close eye on the warrior-wanderer though he did grow on her. In time she began to trust him. A bit more each day, a bit more with each new deed.

Gavran never saw her laugh though, not even once. And by the gods above and under, he wanted to hear her laugh. So he used every chance he got to try and pry it from her lips.

After the events of the Blood Peace, he appointed himself her own personal guard to which the Chrobatian princess did not say yes, but she did not say no either.

And so Gavran fought, he fought and he killed for her. And he loved her.

He knew of her vow; to never marry, to only live for her family and people. And still he stayed.

Gavran could see how old she felt, how tired she was. Tired of being strong, tired of death and failed hope. He wished to ease her burden, to make her let down her guard... but it was not her way. So he stood by her side. And after the war ended and she retreated into the mountains beyond the sea, he followed her.

Kosenc & Nevena (Travis Fimmel&Niamh Walsh)

- When Kosenc first enters the tavern, he is enveloped in heat and warmth, both separate yet together, forming a cocoon around him that he feels himself decide he will not leave until he has to. And there she is – life dancing in the air around her, bawdy jokes pulling him in like a moth to that fiery shine of hers. They should be from opposite ends of the world, of time even; Kosenc of royal blood, Nevena a girl uprooted. And yet, when they meet, the differences fall away like leaves in the wind. A prince on hard-won soil – her home self-built and well-defended. The tavern she runs with her sister-in-all-but-blood becomes their home; their castle. Their core of warmth, a fire always crackling in its midst. With the orange shine of the hearth always upon them and her hair red as flame, some think they are like fire; but fire burns hot, destroys, dies. Water always finds a way, always in movement. They find themselves crashing against each other like waves with no rocks to break their run; thunderous and loud. Loud laughter, boisterous claims, sticky ale on their hands from moving faster than the laws of nature allowed for cleanliness. And always, always the touch, the dance, the joining, until they become the sea in sleep, and with a new storm rise again.

Lobel & Mila (Charlie Hunnam&Florence Pugh)

- It started with a simple childish infatuation, infatuation mostly forgotten and left behind in the fields of gold. Then it was remembered in the early mornings of rainy autumn, remembered and shaped into something else, something new. Something deeper.

She became his summer, the warm brown of her hair his reminder of the present. Lobel has been living in the darkness for so long, drifting through its paths and corners, never knowing when he'll come home, if ever. He sought vengeance, forgiveness. Maybe by getting that he could finally find a semblance of peace, a way to stay warm. And Mila... Mila only sought courage; courage to stand behind her words, courage to not allow herself to be a sheep again. He was her courage; her stubborn brash unapologetic courage. And her northern wind, settling its cold deep in her tired bones, never to escape her. And yet, always drifting away.

There is time to battle, there is time to settle, and there is time to change. As gods make the seasons change and mountains to crumble, so do they. The light streams through the trees, the snow crunches beneath her feet and he dreams of her... Her smell, the gleam in her eyes when she eats soup, her voice. Then he wakes up, cold and away.

Muhlo & Marika (Sam Claflin&Liana Cornet)

- Marika was one of Great Kagan's She-Riders, first to ride into battle and the last to retreat, which is how she first met Muhlo. Of course, at the time she had no idea who he was, she did not know the face of Kisertet, only fires and bodies left in the darkness behind him. She tried to capture him but failed and became a prisoner instead. While she did not know the meaning behind the hard syllables that came out of the Slav's mouth but he kept her alive.

He eventually released her, and both of them doubted they'll see the other ever again. But the gods had other plans in store and so they kept meeting, their paths crossing as and

with them, their swords and their arrows. When the time for peace negotiations arrived and Marika found herself escorting queen Jola to the Slavic stronghold, she also found herself facing the familiar brown eyes of Chrobatian Prince. Muhlo was weary of what might come to pass and so he bode his time, seeking the woman out when the celebrations were in full swing or in the early hours of the morning. He was the one talking, of course. Sometimes she would walk away without even sparing him a glance and sometimes she would pretend he wasn't there. Sometimes she would stay, and sometimes she would spare him a glance in the silence of the night.

On the last night of peace celebrations, a great conspiracy was uncovered; in order to break the peace, a group organised an assassination of Kagan and so the feast turned into bloodshed. Marika died in Muhlo's arms.

Gordan & Tuga (Ioan Gruffud&Miranda Otto)

- Long ago, a golden haired girl offered a flower to an orphan boy whose shouldres grew weary with the weight of the world upon them. And that small act of kindness settled deep in the boy's heart, never to be forgotten nor lost in time.

His love for Tuga only grew with years, evolving from warm care as if she were his own sister, to something much deeper and profound. He never spoke the words, nor did she. Their stolen glances and subtle touch of fingertips spoke louder than any sound. It was not meant to be however, it would feel like a betrayal. Betrayal of trust and love her family gave to him, so he kept himself away.

But war kept living on, taking and taking, never giving. It stretched and stretched, seemingly without end. Still, all hope was not lost.

In the aftermath of years of war and loss and pain, Tuga returned to the place where she and her love took their vows and last lay their eyes upon one another. There under the watchful gaze of Mosor, she built her stone halls where she lived out the rest of her mortal life.

Sometimes she would walk through the fields of thistle by the creek, remembering the days of her youth, days of summer and joy. Days that shall never come to pass again.

Borna & Gailswintha (Aaron T Johnson&Eleanor Tomlinson)

- Borna's reputation precedes him, for he is the King's blood and men such as him have all the city's eyes upon them. He does not care for it - as a warrior, he does not require the admiration of the people, only his enemies' blood red and hot on his hands and face, and a hearth to return to as battle ends. It is this he lives for – family, blood, and the joy of a dance with a mug of ale in his hand. It is this he brings to the sacred halls of Gailswintha's home; the tavern her chosen sister and her can call their own, the home they clawed into being despite the mud and death of war, despite their roots being brutally severed. When he enters, wild laugh echoing from the wooden walls despite his broken nose, a raised eyebrow and a small, firm hand on a shoulder to seat him, their lives tip upside down.

She is rootless; by force as well as choice, and a child of water where he is a son of earth. A river, ever-changing and yet the same, and it is he who at last gives her a bed to settle

in, helps her feel both her feet stand firm on this city, this people, where she never felt she belonged.

He dreams of her; red as summer's kiss, as winter's flame, and he is drawn back to this home he has found. They know it is not to last; too different their fates, their roots, their hands. Yet they maintain their dance - the warmth of his eyes and earnest words of love in times of fear and strife; the warmth of her home, her open arms and songs that speak of spring and gods, not the blood of battle. They grow roots, they rest. Until the next battle, when blood flows again.

Vuk & Snježana (Jamie Dornan&Jessica B Findley)

- They said he was a wolf in human skin, a son long lost in the depths of the Striborwood. While she... she was but a servant girl; steady and determined in her chores and loyalty, ever longing for home she could never have again.

He was familiar, maybe not to her eyes but certainly to her soul. He smelled like home; like her old oak tree and grass in spring, like fallen leaves crashed under a booth in the early autumn morning. They did not talk at first; she brought him his dinner and he cortly nodded and that was it. Then, on the first night when moon was full since he had arrived, she heard him sing and there was not a greater moment she wished with all of her heart she could sing.

Soemtimes half a year would pass without seeing each other, sometimes even more. He believed her dead, she believed she was never to see the waves of her new homeland nor the trees of the old one. And then after all the loss and pain and running, a giant black wolf met her worn out gaze and she smiled for the first time in such a very long time.

Ognjen & Lela (Kristofer Hivju&Imogen Poots)

- Ognjen was fire from the depths of the earth, the tall flame that burns strong in the coldest of winds. His sorrow was deep and rooted in the bones, the kind that settles and makes the edges softer rather than coarse and unyielding. Lela was harshness of the winter's wind and freshness of first morning dew. She was the Nameless one, her sorrow and rage forever etched on her face.

There are people who carry such a sorrow in their eyes that whoever meets their gaze loses something they did not know they possessed before. But when two of such nature meet... even the gods stop their breath for but a moment.

He was of the North, as was she, once upon a time. But the cold far corners of Striborswood weren't hers to wander anymore nor were the affairs and wars of those outside her wooden cottage. Sadly, Davor has his ways and just as Morana's fingertips, he creeps in and settles, stirring up the peace of even the lonliest and secluded souls. And this time, the Great Warrior god came in the shape of a girl and big black wolf and from that moment on, two roads became one. And at its end... Only the White Sisters knew.

Vatroslav&Irmuska (Zac McGowan&Charlie Murphie)

- She doesn't remember what carries the word to her; whether it rides on the wind or sinks upwards through the earth from the spirits around and below, it is whispered in her ear long before the first burning arrow hits ground. Not a word – a name. So Irmuska waits, for moons and moons, and sends out whispers of her own into the world, waiting, watching. On the day when her lord's head greets her from a spike, and his stronghold smoulders in the winter cold, she is ready.

Vatroslav, she thinks as the man enters the great hall, blood dripping from him like water. His eyes are darkened with victory, and yet he halts before her.

Bold, he thinks, taking in the woman in the hall, so small he might fit her into the palm of his hand if she curled her spine just so; and yet so commanding of this hall that he learns has never been hers, not by birth nor by right. It should have been. It will be, a part of him decides.

She comes with him willingly. Her wrists are bound – for his pride – loosely, for hers; yet she makes no move to flee. They travel through the dense forests of the land, and she whispers to the trees; guides his hand to the ground so he can feel the earth be his, be hers, be theirs. He who is of no land; he who has found battle to be his father, mother, nation. She who is of the wind, and the earth, who whispers into waves and smells the future in the fire; she who has never called anything her own except what the gods gifted her.

They conquer.