I know Rosamund only vaguely looks similar to Myrcella, but here they are essentially twins except for the hair.

This chapter was edited by Gladiusx.

Onboard the Seaswift,

Blackwater Bay,

Myrcella Baratheon

“Princess, it's time to awaken.”

The only daughter of Cersei Lannister woke groggily as Septa Eglantine shook her friend awake. She was having a good dream. A kind, grandfatherly man with sea-green eyes had her on his lap as he brushed her long mane of golden hair.

Yawning, the princess grudgingly untangled herself from her bedmate’s arms, hugging Rosamund to sleep always soothed her. The Septa didn’t like Myrcella’s penchant for warm hugs, even hugging Tommen was not appropriate for some reason, even though her mother said it was fine. Then again, that was probably the only thing the Queen approved of, as not a day would pass before Cersei Lannister would admonish Myrcella for something. Her love of gardening, her desire for friendship, her interaction with those her mother would deem unworthy, or even the one rare moment she attempted to protest Sansa’s mistreatment in court.

Myrcella shivered as she remembered the cold look her mother gave her, as well as Joffrey’s face twisting in rage. She tried to forget the daily scenes of her first friend getting tormented for her father’s crimes. The Starks had accepted them in their home to be treated like honored guests, while Myrcella could not look at the red-haired girl before feeling shame and embarrassment now. The Seven-Pointed Star was clear – a parent’s sin did not pass onto the child.

Rosamund stirred, interrupting her musings. Her companion had straight, golden hair, which was very similar to Myrcella’s curly ringlets that were silky and lustrous. They had only known each

other for less than a year, ever since Lord Stark was arrested, but Rosa and Cella, as they called each other in private, had instantly bonded on how similar they looked and their shared habits. As the days passed, Myrcella found herself growing closer to her new companion and tried to forget about Sansa's woeful existence. But the more she tried to forget, the more vivid the memory of the red-haired girl getting beaten by the white cloaks appeared in her sleep. Her uncle had decided that Rosa would join her to Dorne as a handmaid, though Cella understood that Rosa was meant to be body double. Myrcella would admit she had welcomed the idea of having a friendly face in an unknown land.

Shaking her head, the princess focused on her yawning bedmate. Fully awake, she noted that the Septa had mistaken Rosamund for her again. It was dark outside as they stood up and started pulling up their gowns. Was it Stannis?

The thought instantly had her fully awake and alert, while Rosamund still looked queasy, the rocking of the ship not agreeing with her stomach. It was such a piteous thing, as her companion had been so delighted at the mere idea of sailing, only for the joy to be snuffed out when Rosamund struggled to hold her meal.

"Septa, I'm not Cella." Rosamund muttered groggily as she rubbed her eyes.

Septa Eglantine clicked her tongue in annoyance, but the Princess knew the old woman was secretly glad she and Rosamund looked so alike. Today, they were supposed to dye her hair brown, much to Myrcella's chagrin. This would ruin her lustrous curls, but needs must. Rosamund could wear her clothes; even if her friend was captured, they had no reason to harm her as a hostage. At most, Rosamund would be married off to some knight, the fate that was expected of her companion anyway.

But Myrcella didn't want to be separated from her new friend and prayed they were never dragged into such a dreadful scenario. Still, the Princess knew her duty; she was to be wed to a young Dornish Prince, sealing an alliance to secure her brother's throne. At least the Water Gardens were said to be beautiful.

"Come now, Princess, Lady Rosamund, it is time for our prayers."

Both girls blinked, confused as morning prayers were to happen only every seventh day, but followed after the Septa, too sleepy to argue with the stern woman. They had to wash each other in a lukewarm basin quickly, no maids had come because Uncle Tyrion had decided additional men-at-arms were more important. She was sure her mother would disapprove of her helping her handmaid instead of the other way around, but Cersei was not here. They quickly combed each other's hair and were finally ready.

The pious were to present themselves clean before the gods and garbed in their finest garments, according to the Septa. Septa Eglantine had them face the statues of the seven she had placed by the cabin's window, where they could see the sun just starting to rise on the horizon.

The most pious and the sinners prayed thrice a day – dawn, noon, and dusk. Usually, it was done in a Sept, but simple statues would do, and even they were not truly necessary – the Seven-Pointed Star claimed the gods could hear your prayer at any corner of the world. Then again, neither Robert Baratheon nor Cersei Lannister were particularly pious, and it was a miracle if they showed their face in a Sept twice a sennight. Yet it seems the Septa had decided to elucidate them with the Light of the Seven daily.

"Who will you pray to, Cella?" Rosa whispered as they approached the altar with the small marble statues. It was up to the devotees to decide whom to dedicate the prayer to, and traditionally, an unmarried princess like her would pray to the Maiden. Yet, Myrcella remembered her dream that morning, a kind old man who had a grandfatherly bearing and a handsome young man with a powerful physique looking on from the side. She couldn't remember their faces or the dream itself, only the soft sea-green eyes and a warm smile.

"The Father. I feel like having a father's guidance today." Cella smiled as she lit a candle for the Father, and then they kneeled with the septa and began their prayers.

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Myrcella left her cabin with Rosa and the septa in tow, and turned to the guardsman standing vigil outside with a friendly nod. “Rolder! Any troubles in the night?”

His eyes shone and his tired frame straightened up at the mention of his name and eagerly slammed a fist to his breastplate in greeting. “Nay, Princess, the sea was calm.”

It was something she had heard from Lord Stark… not many remembered the names of the guardsmen, but when you did, they would fight harder for you. Traitor or not, Lord Stark sounded like a wise man, and Myrcella had found herself chatting up the guards and learning more about them.

“Is Ser Arys still asleep?”

“He’s doing his morning prayers, princess, and bid me tell you he’ll take his post as soon as Godwyn has helped him get into his armor.”

She had noticed Ser Arys had begun praying far too oft recently, doubtlessly seeking absolution from the Mother and the Maiden. The kingsguard were sworn to obey the king first and foremost, but beating an innocent maiden like Sansa Stark broke their knightly vows given before the Seven.

A glance at the weary guardsman had Myrcella frowning. “Go get some rest, Rolder, the ship is full of leal men, and Ser Arys will be here soon enough.”

“I would never! The Lord Hand had insisted we never leave you out of sight.”

“Oh my, Rolder. Are you saying that you have been watching a royal princess in her sleep?” Myrcella couldn’t help but ask, causing the guard to pale significantly when the septa scowled at him.

“I-I w-would never!”

Before Cella could tease him more, Ser Arys Oakheart arrived, heralded by the sound of his steel greaves and clinking chainmail.

“Princess.” The kingsguard bowed, his helmet in one hand and his other resting on the hilt of his sword. Myrcella gazed at him for a moment before turning to the red cloak.

“You may go rest now, Rolder. That is an order from your princess.” The man nodded gratefully then excused himself and Myrcella turned to the Kingsguard. “Walk with me, Ser.”

The knight followed as Myrcella led the way up the deck and beheld the still-foggy morning. She knew she was not subtle in her distaste of the Kingsguard, their beating of Sansa Stark still fresh on her mind. Which true knight would dare strike a maiden? Yet defying Joffrey was not… easy, she knew that all too well. Yet it didn’t decrease her mislike for the white cloaks.

She nodded and smiled pleasantly to the various sailors and oarsmen on duty, even as her Septa not so subtly coughed with disapproval behind her.

“Septa Eglantine, perhaps some more bedrest would be in order? It would be unfortunate if you catch an ailment,” Myrcella turned to jab at the old woman, knowing she would never rebuke a royal openly.

“How thoughtful of you, Princess. But my duty is much more important than a mere affliction of the flesh.” Judging by the angry flush creeping up the Septa’s woolen collar, she knew it too, as she lagged behind with a sour face as if she had sucked on a lemon.

Still, Myrcella would not be pushed around by some crotchety old priestess. Showing her face to the crew would surely shore up their morale, propriety be damned!

Myrcella’s gaze wandered around the sea; silhouettes of the escorting ships could be seen through the morning fog. A soft breeze dispersed a part of the mist, allowing her to take a proper look. The *Boldwind*, a galley similar in design to their ship sailed close; the marines on deck were all armed and ready for a fight, and the *Crimson Gale*, a bigger galley where her dowry was stored. Naturally, the dowry of a princess would be worth a king’s ransom, as her mother had declared. Yet Myrcella had no idea of the contents in question, but they somehow required a whole ship to ferry.

Further in the distance, she could almost see the mighty shapes of the war galleys assigned to protect her; *King Robert's Hammer, Lionstar,* and *Lady Lyanna*. There were other smaller galleys and longships in her escort but they were hidden somewhere in the soft, cotton-like veil of mist.

They stopped by the Captain, who greeted them with a clumsy salute. “Yer highness.”

“Captain Rogar.” Myrcella nodded with a smile, “A good morning to you.”

“Uh, you too, princess.” Rogar glanced nervously at the intimidating visage of Ser Arys before bowing deeply.

“You mentioned this vessel was quite fast yesterday.” Myrcella started talking before the Captain grew too intimidated to speak properly. “Tell me more of the ship.”

A smile bloomed on Rogar’s face as he took the opportunity to heap praise on his pride and joy. The *Seaswift* was a small galley but had massive square sails on its only mast. The single lower deck housed the hold and the cabin bar for the captain’s quarters which were on the stern. The only other rooms were reserved for her guardsmen. On the main deck, teams of oarsmen rowed at the call of one of the officers, as they sang one of their catchy songs, sea shanties, the captain explained.

The mood of the crew was joyful, with sailors cracking jokes and singing merrily. All of them were glad to leave King’s Landing, it seemed.

It was all very fascinating in the beginning, but the princess regretted starting the conversation as Captain Rogar only grew more and more enthusiastic as the flood of words left his mouth. She could hear Rosa shuffling her feet, and could almost feel the Septa’s glower at the man as well as her own stomach rumbling. They were supposed to have breakfast, and Myrcella tried to look for a chance to excuse herself without causing offense but the chance was taken from her at the sound of clanging bells from one of the nearby ships.

Immediately, everyone grew silent as the joy of the ship drained, replaced with anxious caution as the captain halted mid-speech and turned to Ser Arys.

“Princess, we must retreat to the cabin,” The white knight offered her his hand as chivalry dictated, but she straightened her back and looked at the captain.

“What is happening?”

The ring of the bells echoed ominously all across the fog, as Myrcella strained to look through the persistent veil, only to see blurry shapes moving through the mist while the nearby ships were getting ready for… a fight?

“These are the warning bells. Enemies have been sighted, and we are preparing for battle, princess.”

Myrcella nodded imperiously, “Then do what you must, Captain. I shall remain here until we know what the fuss is about. Ser Arys, rouse the rest of my guards and ready them for combat.”

The kingsguard grimaced as he lowered his arm, her commands clear. Myrcella would not be hiding in a tiny cabin until they were certain of what they were facing. Was it stubborn of her? Mayhaps so, but anyone who could command her was left in King’s Landing, which meant *she* was in charge here!

“Very well, princess.” The white cloak left to gather the rest of her red cloaks while she calmly waited on the deck, showing her lack of fear to the men onboard.

“Princess, I must protest! Your safety is paramount. You should retire to your cabin until the matter is over.” Septa Eglantine, however, did not shy away from speaking up.

“Your counsel is duly noted, Septa, yet you cannot command me. If the men see their princess running away at the earliest sign of trouble, what would they think of the royal family?” All the sailors knew who she was, so dyeing her hair would be useless. All it would take was a cowardly oarsman for the stupid ruse to fall apart.

“They will do their duty regardless,” Eglantine scoffed.

“I have said my piece, and my word is final. If you would like to retire to the cabin, do so. I shall not begrudge you for it.”

The old woman stiffened, her face twisting in worry and hesitation before sighing. “I shall remain by your side, Princess.”

“Thank you, Septa.” Myrcella smiled kindly at the elderly woman. She might have been an annoying nag over many things, yet she knew Septa Eglantine’s worry was genuine. “You too, Rosa. I would not force you to stand here while you could be safe in the cabin.”

“I'm staying with you, Princess.” A smile bloomed on her face at the decisive reply as Rosa straightened up, trying to imitate her own posture.

Soon, her full contingent of guardsmen, all six red cloaks commanded by Ser Arys as the seventh number, a holy number, were standing protectively around her as the *Seaswift* had all hands to the oars. The Captain glanced at her hesitantly before shaking his head and busying himself with barking out commands. As the morning fog slowly dissipated, Myrcella found the *Seaswift* sailing away along with the *Boldwind* and the *Crimson Gale* trailing a little behind. The rest of the fleet had turned around, yet she could not understand the bell clanging and the waving flags from the other ships.

It was later after breakfast was served to her and her companions on the deck, that Myrcella finally understood what the commotion was about. A single ship was sighted behind them, and it did not answer any of their commands to change course, forcing the fleet to treat it as hostile. The Princess wondered about the wisdom of sending nearly a dozen ships, three of them warships, after a single vessel while they sailed away, but the Captain had his orders from her uncle.

Her ship, the *Boldwind*, and the *Crimson Gale* are to avoid engaging any foes, but any who approach must be defeated swiftly by the rest of the fleet.

It was a whole hour later when the morning sun finally banished the last vestiges of the lingering mist.

“Captain! Behind us, something strange is happening.” The call came from one of the cabin boys clinging like a monkey on a branch onto the top of the mast. The princess frowned, surely there was a safer way to place a lookout?

Rogar stiffened and hurriedly produced a Myrish Fareye before moving to the stern of the ship with his first mate. Myrcella followed with her group, and she did not need any glass tube to see the oddness before her.

Their escort, visible a moment ago as they confronted the lone ship, was suddenly swallowed by a wall of mist. It did not look natural, even to Myrcella's inexperienced eyes, for fog was not supposed to stay in the same spot and look like some enormous veil-like box, for the sky was clear above it. The princess could almost hear bells and worried shouts in the wind before the last of the ships was swallowed by the fog, and then… silence.

“Father above! This is not normal.” The captain rubbed his eyes several times before looking again, only to find the same sight. Giving the Fareye to his first mate, the man had a similar reaction.

“All hands to the oars! On the double, row faster, damn you!” The Captain looked worried, and so did the oarsmen. Myrcella could be wrong, but she felt as if their ship was going slower. Over by the *Boldwind* and *Crimson Gale*, the crews seemed to be doing the same.

“Princess! I must insist you retire to the cabin.” Ser Arys’s words were full of steel, and Myrcella couldn’t find her tongue to voice an objection, so she nodded obediently.

Yet before they could move, a loud crack from wood splintering came from the left.

“What in the seven hells…” The princess would agree with Godwyn’s exclamation as everyone onboard the *Seaswift* stared with wide eyes at the other escort ship.

One moment, the *Boldwind* was rowing a hundred feet beside them, and then the next, all fifty oars were cut cleanly in half, causing it to tilt heavily towards them.

“By the Warrior, only Valyrian Steel could be so sharp to inflict such clean cuts!”

Ser Arys had barely said the words before another similar sound came from the opposite side of the ship. Myrcella turned, holding Rosamund’s hand in worry, as the *Crimson Gale’s* oars received a similar treatment.

“Retract oars!”

The Captain's order barely came in time for the men to retract the line of oars from the right side before a shadow flew from the water, cutting at the space the oars were in but missing by inches. Myrcella could have sworn it was a person, but that was–

“A merman!” Rosamund exclaimed, even as she pointed at the shadow.

Myrcella stared at the murky sea as the shade agilely circled their ship before disappearing into the depths.

“All hands, abandon oars. Weapons out. Call for the escort to join us!”

The captain's roar finally roused the man on the bell, who quickly rang the clapper several times. The oarsmen abandoned their paddles in favor of axes and long knives, though a few of them had crossbows as well.

“Stay behind me, Princess.” Ser Arys moved before them, with the rest of the red cloaks drawing their weapons and spreading in a tight half-circle of steel around her.

Before anyone could react, the water behind exploded in a mighty splash, dousing all of them in seawater. Something heavy smacked on the deck with a thud, and a powerful hand clasped her shoulder, causing her to freeze.

Fingers sank into her skin like iron clasps, and her mind was bound by terror as another hand grasped Rosamund’s shoulder.

“Alright, chumps! I don’t want anyone to move a muscle, or else your princess might take a dip in the sea.” The amused voice spoke in heavy baritone from above, but Myrcella did not dare to move even a finger, limbs all feeling as heavy as lead.

The Septa and all the guardsmen in front slowly turned, all looking tense. Ser Arys’ face was twisted halfway between anger and worry. “Unhand the princess at once!”

“No can do, hotshot. *My* Princess has bid me to retrieve her *bosom friend* from the *machinations* of her *evil* family.” Her captor spoke in a queer dialect and the way he overly exaggerated the words made her think his only reference to noble speak was from mummers.

Also, princess? Friend? Myrcella nearly laughed at calling her family evil, despite the terror creeping through her veins.

The kingsguard looked… mutinous. “I do not know how you sneaked onboard, but you are heavily outnumbered. Surrender the princess at once, and you shall be given a fair trial.”

“I don't know, man,” the baritone voice sounded… more amused than frightened despite being outnumbered heavily. There was also a hint of… dismissal? “Surrendering is just not my style. Although you keep saying princess, I have no clue which one of them is the real one. I was told she was blonde, cute, and had green eyes. I gotta say, both of you match that perfectly.” Myrcella was… confused, even more so when the hand on her shoulder tapped her for a moment. “How about you guys drop your weapons until my ride gets here, and I'll be off your hair. With these two cuties, of course.”

The princess froze as the odd meaning finally sank, despite the whimsical tone. He did not recognize her from Rosamund. She risked a glance at her friend and bit her lip when Rosa looked at her with a sad smile before narrowing her eyes in determination.

“Unhand me, you knave! Do you have any idea who you–”

Before Rosamund could continue, Myrcella jabbed her elbow as hard as she could at the closest part of the man’s body, which ended up being his groin.

“Fuck!”

The princess didn't think, the moment her captor grunted in pain and inadvertently let go of her, she grabbed Rosa and hurried to the protection of her guards. Grinning giddily, Myrcella could not believe she had succeeded! That she managed to–

Ser Arys rushed in, his sword raised for a powerful two-handed strike at the bent-over form of the intruder. Myrcella couldn't help but stare morbidly as the white cloak’s sword descended on the man’s head.

Only, for a hand to spring up like a snake, grabbing the hilt of the blade, halting it with ease.

“Feisty little kitten, aren’t you, princess?” The man’s pained groan turned into a chuckle that echoed deeply, the sound seeming to reverberate to the sea, causing the waves to rise and the wind to howl. Myrcella stared in shock at the handsome dark-haired man with familiar sea-green eyes who couldn’t be much older than her brother.

“Get back, princess!” Rolder and the Septa grabbed her and Rosa as they retreated to the deck. Myrcella couldn’t help but notice that the escort ships were also quickly approaching, doubtlessly having spotted the intruder.

“Let go of me, cur!” The scene before her would have been amusing if not for the seriousness of the situation. The man had grabbed the hilt of Ser Arys’ sword, gripping both of her sworn sword’s hands in the process and pulling him effortlessly as if he were a Fleabottom boy, all with one hand.

The white cloak tried to pull away, but it was futile, for the intruder’s hand was as if made from steel. The sound of metal denting echoed in the wind, and Ser Arys’ grunts turned painful. A twanging sound came from behind her, and Myrcella blinked. She blinked again, but no, the scene didn’t change.

Only, the green-eyed fiend held a crossbow bolt in his free hand, looking even more amused than before.

The red cloaks charged forward, but a long-drawn-out sigh came from the man as he dropped the bolt and threw Ser Arys like a rag doll at the three guards, sending them toppling down right by her feet.

“I wanted to do this the easy way, but you medieval schmucks just don’t understand how outclassed you are.” The man stepped towards them and unsheathed a great sword from his back, causing Myrcella’s eyes to widen.

Longer than most people were tall, with a blade wider than her palm, the dark rippled steel glinted ominously in the sun. *Ice*.

“Attack, it doesn’t matter how strong he is, he’s still human. Attack, damn you!”

Ser Arys' cry galvanized the men. Crossbows were aimed, even from the newly arrived escort ships, and a hail of steel rained upon the intruder.

Only, under her disbelieving gaze, he did not turn into a pincushion but swung the enormous greatsword with one arm so quickly and effortlessly as if he were a babe waving around a toy sword. The crossbow bolts were swept away, the man impossibly smug and unharmed.

A brave sailor charged forward, axe in hand, only to be grabbed with a single hand and easily tossed overboard like some errant pup.

More of the crew attacked, yet Ser Arys held back the red cloaks as they surrounded her and Rosamund protectively. Myrcella couldn't help but notice that the attacker seemed to treat this as some sort of game. Valyrian Steel could cleave through flesh and bone with nary an effort, yet the man was dancing around them, using the flat of the blade with an amused smile on his face, as if he was treating the sailors like errant children. Any attempts to strike him were thwarted with effortless finesse, and Myrcella couldn't tear her gaze from the sight.

By the time the man had reached the midpoint of the ship, there were dozens of groaning men on the deck, suffering from bruises or even broken bones, yet there were even more who had been thrown overboard. The green-eyed warrior had eyes only for her when he stopped in the middle of the deck.

"Will you come quietly, princess?" The voice turned as soft as silk. "Or… should I kill every living soul here? I find myself feeling lenient now, but my companion seems to have run out of mercy for your family."

Myrcella couldn't help but believe he could easily fulfill his threat. How could she not, when the man treated grown men as errant children, and it did not look like anyone was truly a threat to him?

"Silence, knave! I will have your head." One of the red cloaks, Dake, cried out as he advanced with a mace supported by a new wave of sailors that boarded from the escort ships. They all rushed the last few feet, only for the warrior to finally use his sword and slash it horizontally. Myrcella stared in silence as five heads were separated from their bodies, their blood gushing from their necks.

Dake's head rolled on the ground and stopped in front of the Septa, who cried out in horror, before collapsing bonelessly on the deck.

"I ask you again, Myrcella Baratheon. Surrender, or will you watch as all of these good men die?" His voice had gone chilly, face hardened like a piece of granite, and Myrcella gulped.

The ship rocked heavily as the waves splashed onboard, the wind roiled, and through all of that, the Princess could only stare at the severed head of her guard. The newly arrived sailors were now cautiously watching the man, gazes locked on *Ice*, black blood dripping freely from the blade. The ship continued rocking heavily as the waves licked at it, spraying salty water onboard. The wind roiled harder, but the Princess could only stare at the severed head of Dake.

Poor Dake, who always smiled kindly at her. Who had a wife in Lannisport and three young boys who were now fatherless.

"We are no cravens, Demon! Men, attack, shoot him to death." Ser Arys's cry tore through the heavy silence, and at his signal, crossbowmen aimed at the warrior, who simply sighed and sheathed his sword.

Just as she heard the twangs of the bows, the man raised his hands, and the *sea rose with it!*

The world… fell quiet as everyone had just halted at the mystical sight. Even Myrcella's mind felt as if it had fallen into a quagmire. Deafening silence, as the curses, insults, groans of pain, or even the errant prayer halted in terrified wonder.

The sea itself rose high into the sky, blotting out the sun and casting a terrifying darkness as it surrounded all three vessels, dwarfing them like ants. A few thuds echoed, and many a sailor had started dropping their arms on the deck, and Myrcella could see they had all lost their will to fight.

"Seven above."

"Storm. It's the Storm God!"

"No, it's the Drowned God."

"It doesn't matter who it is, he will kill us all!"

The murmurs were getting louder by the moment, and even Ser Arys' hands were shaking. One shout, however, caught her attention.

"The sea! It's splitting, and… a ship is coming through…" They stared at the pointed finger where indeed a ship was sailing through the massive frozen wave like it didn't exist.

"Time is running out, princess. My ride is here, and I might just *accidentally* drop the sea on your heads. What will it be?"

How could anyone fight against *this*?!

What good were valor and skill at arms against such a powerful warrior – nay – sorcerer?

Still, Myrcella was surprised at the sudden calm that overtook her mind despite the raging terror in her breast. Glancing at Rosa, she found her friend breathing heavily, her eyes wide with fear. Glad she wasn't the only one feeling afraid, the princess straightened her back before stepping forward, pushing away Ser Arys' halfhearted attempt to hold her back.

"So long as you guarantee the safety of everyone on all three ships, I shall surrender into your custody. Provided you introduce yourself." Myrcella stopped in front of the sorcerer, whose face finally softened into a gentle smile that looked strangely familiar. Up close, she saw a few beads of sweat on his brows, and it occurred to her that the show of force might not be as easy as he made it out to be.

"Good choice, you've certainly got guts, I'll give you that." The warrior lowered his hands, allowing the sea to lower with it, causing several people to lose their footing, but the man held her by the shoulder. "Name's Perseus. Now," He suddenly squeezed her shoulder painfully, causing her to grimace. "Did you really have to hit me in the balls?"

Before she could form a reply, the other ship finally arrived adjacent to them, the sea somehow pushing the *Boldwind* away from their ship to give it space to moor.

Myrcella stared in confusion as there was no one on board except for an oddly familiar black stallion. Suddenly, a gangway stretched from the ship to theirs, seemingly by itself, and a familiar figure with red hair came from the hold and crossed over to their ship. No one dared to approach

her, for Perseus had dragged her towards the end of the gangway as they greeted the unbelievable sight of Sansa Stark landing onboard and gazing coldly at the surrounding men.

“You probably know my companion, Princess Sansa Stark.”

Suddenly, Myrcella was not sure about her prospects, especially when her former friend’s cold eyes settled on her, and a vicious grin bloomed on her face.

A*H*M

Somewhere south of the Wolfswood,

A few days later,

Asha Greyjoy

She watched impassively as Cromm, one of her more brutish crew members, took a screaming peasant girl from the village they sacked to one of the standing shacks, all the while sporting a broken nose from another wench. The Northmen might have been sparse along the Stony Shore, but it seemed they were as rabid as a cornered dog when confronted with death and humiliation. The surrounding men laughed in approval as they enjoyed their well-earned booty, though Asha scoffed at the term, for they had yet to sack a single keep or walled town.

It’s been a moon since they landed on the Stony Shore, and Asha couldn’t help but wonder about her brother, Theon, who had taken time to acclimate to their ways. The years of being forced to act like a Greenlander had made him forget his roots, yet he was eager to prove himself worthy of the Old Ways.

That eagerness turned into zealotry a few days ago when he nearly drowned fighting a Northman by the Great Lakes of the Rills. It was before they separated to each reave on their own. They were all fighting for their lives against the sudden attack by a Ryswell force supported by a motley group of Tallhart riders, but they had managed to prevail, albeit barely. The men might rave about it being a great victory, but Asha knew the truth, it was a fucking embarrassment!

A thousand reavers to be ambushed by a measly force of a hundred horsemen and only slaying a mere third before the enemy escaped, leaving scores of Ironmen dead. Granted, they expected an attack by the Ryswells, the closest House to the Stony Shore, and they were even gaining the upper hand on those Barrow Knights. Who would have thought some green Tallhart fool to be so daring as to charge into their rear, and allow the Northmen to escape?

Nuncle Aeron had dragged poor Theon from the lake where he was drowning from the dead weight of a slain rider, and gave him the kiss of life. Theon had been stuck underwater for at least ten minutes, yet against all odds, the only living son of Balon Greyjoy *lived*. Her last brother had awakened with a manic glint in his eyes, and Aeron had not wasted time proclaiming Theon as The Drowned God's Champion.

Since then, her brother had taken to their ways with a vengeance, almost like a spirit possessed. First in every battle, and fighting for every scrap of booty won, no matter how meager. None could begrudge him paying the Iron Price, although the men were beginning to grow… annoyed with the lack of meaningful loot. Turnips and cabbages, shovels and hoes; none was of any good for a proper Ironman.

An unbidden snicker came to Asha as she remembered her brother's vow to take every Northern cunt they came upon as a salt wife. It did not work out as well as Theon hoped, as many a Northern woman preferred to die fighting or slit their throats than get captured. Something that Asha could not help but respect, even as she heard the sound of curses and meaty smacks from the house Cromm dragged the girl in. Still, the daughter of Balon felt nothing for these wretches. They were weak, and the weak endured, while the strong took whatever they wanted.

Regardless, word had spread, and despite not showing much success aside from a few skirmishes against hunters and villagers, the other raiders had started to band behind her brother – swelling the numbers under Theon's command from eight ships to twenty. Asha did not know how to feel about the matter; she was glad her brother was not lost to the Greenlander ways, but that also meant her chance to be heir slowly but surely sailed away.

She felt restless, and the only daughter of Balon Greyjoy turned to look at the foreboding woods of the Wolfswood. She had planned to take Deepwood Motte by sea, but that plan had failed before

it could even begin, as her attempts to recruit the other captains failed once they threw their lot behind her brother's. That, and the fact they were discovered at the Flint cliffs and attacked by the Ryswells made their only advantage, the element of surprise, null. No raider wanted to attack a prepared castle, especially one so deep in the woods.

It was incredibly annoying, as she did not have the men to take any of the holdfasts and castles they came across, only ten ships and their crews followed her command, with the rest following Theon. There were about two dozen more ships who refused to follow anyone aside from their own captains, and Asha was unsure which part of this wasteland they had decided to reave. Even with the majority of the North's fighting force in the South, they still had enough men to defend their castles, and the Ironborn were never good at storming big keeps. Taking it by surprise was one thing, but attacking a prepared holdfast? Only fools would do that.

So far, all they got from this fruitless endeavor was death away from the sea, with the only loot for the men were dead women, nuts, salted pork, and a myriad of farming tools. A few useful fishing nets here and there and a handful of hunting bows and lumber axes were the finest loot one could stumble on.

Asha hoped Uncle Victarion would succeed in taking Moat Cailin, or else this entire *invasion* would be the biggest joke in Ironborn history. Her uncle had the full force of the Iron Fleet, nearly fifteen thousand Ironborn compared to their paltry two thousand, and he was the only one who could do any sort of damage to this frozen wasteland. If she was in her uncle's place, she would take the Moat and garrison it before moving to Barrowton with its wooden walls and sack it for all it was worth. Unfortunately, her uncle wasn't the sharpest axe around, and Asha could never predict what he would do.

More curses came from the hut, and the sound of something shattering and a man's gurgles broke her from her musings. Motioning for one of the men to check on Cromm, she groaned in frustration when he reported the fool got killed by a chamber pot to the head and the woman he was taking slit her throat with a broken piece of clay.

"How many does that make?"

“Six in as many days. These Northern whores do have a bite to them, eh? I guess they know they won’t even survive to be salt wives, considering how deep inland we are.” Qarl the Maid snickered, not caring for the loss of their crewmate.

Before Asha could retort, Droopeye Dale called a warning, and she looked at where he was pointing. Riders approached, causing her to stand and her hand to trail to her axes, yet she relaxed when she recognized the Greyjoy kraken of her brother’s doublet, riding that silly horse he got from Lordsport. Theon’s hair was a wild mess, yet it paled to the bloody mania in his eyes, which looked almost black from how large his irises had become.

She counted at least a thousand men following her brother, a lot more than the last she had seen him. Had Theon managed to recruit the rest of the captains reaving blindly between the Great Lakes?

The rest of the men looked on curiously, forgetting their dead crewmate, as her brother stopped before them, followed by Dagmer Cleftjaw and Uncle Aeron. “Brother. What brings you here?”

“Asha, dearest sister. The Drowned God has given me an opportunity that would only ever come once in a lifetime, and I am here to offer you the chance to put our names in history!”

She looked askance at her brother, “What sort of opportunity?”

“Why, taking the heart of the North, of course!”

The declaration caused a lot of interest, and Asha’s eyes widened. Taking Winterfell? That had never been done in history, the closest was when the Boltons burned sections of the castle and the town. The amount of hidden wealth in one of the most ancient citadels of Westeros just waiting to be taken, nearly caused the daughter of Balon to immediately agree, but she managed to control herself. Her frustration with the lack of worthwhile loot was not high enough for her to blindly follow her still green brother into a foolishly dangerous endeavor just for the promise of treasure.

“Tell me more.” Theon’s smile sent shivers down her spine as he relayed his plan. It was ambitious, it was reckless, nay, it was mad.

Yet, it might just work.

It would have been so easy for Percy to drown the fleet, but what would be the point? Getting Myrcella's escort lost in magic fog was simple for him, raising the damn sea to get his point across was a bit too much for the poor mortals, lol. Still, it might not have been obvious, but it certainly tired him out to make that stunt.

Cella still gave him something to remember not to be *too* cocky.

The Wild Hares actually save the day this time, instead of getting wiped out thanks to a Ryswell force that was in the area *for some reason*. It was not enough to change much though, as Theon now has even more troops and they are all concentrated in one spot.

Now, why was Asha with Theon instead of attacking Deepwood Motte? Because logically, practically, and realistically, attacking the Motte makes *no fucking sense*, and taking it makes even less, let alone holding it. The castle is about 20 miles away from the Bay of Ice and is *an actual castle*, not some walled town. Wood or stone, walls are walls. Motte and Bailey is its description, and they are difficult to take even if they only have a handful of troops protecting them. Asha supposedly had a thousand Ironborn in the books yet that was inconsistent with the amount of ships that attacked the Stony Shore and the amount under Victarion. Right now, she barely has 300 or 400 raiders, what hope does she have in taking a castle, even a wooden castle, when she has no siege equipment, no terrain advantage, no supply lines, and no element of surprise because there is no fucking way no one saw them coming all the way from Sea Dragon Point, past Bear Island and all along the Wolfswood, let alone the Flint Cliffs! Ravens exist for a reason.

So, Asha shall join Theon instead, and I will be writing their invasion as realistically as possible. This means I will role-play them and decide how they could reach their goals of bloodying the North with their meager forces while still earning a profit. I'm warning you guys now, this isn't a fix it fic, and as a wise-ass ginger once said, *people die when they are killed.*

Want to read three chapters ahead or just support me? Join me on Patr(eo)n under the same penname.