

## Chapter One

Ada would be meeting her husband for the first time in eleven years.

The thought kept her awake into the early morning. Shafts of light peeked through her bed curtains, and she knew the castle would already be preparing for Lord Mainper's return. But here it was silent and peaceful. Her favourite handmaid slept naked beside her, dark hair fanning out over the pillows. Ada rolled closer to rain light kisses over her nose, cheeks and forehead, tugging her awake with little pecks.

"Hmm, my lady?" Selease yawned, then giggled as the kisses continued, "would you like the fire lit?"

"No. Let's just lie here awhile. I don't want the day to begin. Not yet."

They nuzzled closer; legs entangled. Ada started to complain about the day, but Selease was already back to sleep, much to her annoyance.

She remembered her husband as an old, hairy man who'd been cold to her on the one day they'd spent together. Like a grizzled bear too full to consider her even worthy as a snack.

"We won't be able to do this anymore. Not when he arrives." Ada said, poking Selease. She groaned in return and nestled further under the duvet.

"You don't know that. M'lord only needs an heir and a spare... after that, I hear lots of men ignore their wives." She yawned, words mumbled. Three seconds later and she was asleep yet again.

Ada huffed and rolled onto her back to stare up at the canopy; an intricate pattern of vines and leaves decorated the wood, curling around the sigil of her husband's house. A lion stood on his hind legs, roaring. He looked angry, she thought. Her husband had seemed bad tempered on their wedding day as well, maybe due to her sobbing.

"What if he takes over?" She said, kicking Selease with her foot.

"Ouch, Ada. He is the Lord."

"Yes, but... I've been in charge since I was four and ten. I don't want to stop, I... I enjoy being the one people go to."

"The lady still rules the household."

"That's not the same. I'll have to do what he tells me."

Selease laughed at that, opening one eye to grin up at her. "Like how I have to do what you tell me?"

"No. Not like that." She rolled away. Ada had taken charge of Skyfell castle and its surrounding holdfasts since her arrival as a maiden wife. Her husband had been too busy at war, and then at court with the King. He never wrote, never visited. He left the ruling of his house to her. No one had been more grateful for his absence than Ada. "He hasn't even told me why he's coming back. He just told Rikard to expect him. The letter wasn't even addressed to me."

"Maybe he misses his wife?"

"We don't even know each other. The last time I saw him I was nine."

"Even more reason to see you."

"What if he doesn't like me, Selease?"

That gave her pause, and the handmaid opened both her eyes, leaning on an elbow. "Well... Everyone likes you, Ada." She said.

"You're lying. Rikard doesn't like me. Or Old Martha."

"A grumpy steward and a bad tempered cook? Why would you care about them? You have some friends. I'll light the fire." Selease got up and pulled the bed curtains open, letting in a harsh blaze of light that had Ada hiding under her pillow with a groan. Stupid girl, why did she do that? And she was a terrible liar. Ada only had Selease, and even then, she wasn't sure if the handmaid joined her in bed as willingly as she'd like.

Her bad mood crept on throughout the morning. Ada left her breakfast untouched and stalked across the courtyard to oversee preparations. At least she would have plenty to do before her husband arrived, people would need her guidance.

It was busy, just as she'd expected. The portcullis was down, and a heavy stream of peasants were drifting in and out from town. Wagons splashed through muddy puddles carrying wicker baskets full of spices and vegetables, piles of extra blankets, logs for fires, barrels of ale and in one wagon a great brown bear huddling in the corner of its cage. She spotted a pig's head lolling off the side of another and wrinkled her nose at their dinner. Blank eyes stared back before disappearing towards the kitchens. There was to be a great feast for their Lord's return. 15 courses at least. She would have to ask Martha which dishes she had planned. Yes, that would be the perfect place to start. Then she would make sure fresh rushes had been placed in the great hall, and after that maybe she'd have time for a spot of tea in the gardens.

Following the pig's head, she watched washer women beating the dust off rugs from several windows, others were gossiping by the well with buckets full of water, a trio of guards were playing dice by the barracks despite their lady's presence in the yard, and two stable boys were herding all the horses out to pasture to make room in the stables.

This gave her pause and she watched the herd trotting out the gate with a little frown. The boys were mounted themselves, though their great shires were not wearing saddles and they had neglected to put on shoes or shirts. She frowned as they whistled the whinnying herd through the crowd. Ada felt her face heating up as she spotted her own palfrey in the commotion.

Changing direction, she raised her skirts and stomped across the yard towards the horses, nearly colliding with some peasant woman pulling water from the well. She called her a stupid girl and pushed past, only for a rushing cart to splatter mud onto her soft, suede shoes.

She heard the woman giggling but didn't have the courage to turn and face them. Instead sheer determination saw Ada walking up to the horse master. He was watching his boys by the stables, leaning against the building and chewing bitter root. As she reached his side he spat a big plgem of black into the mud.

"What is the meaning of this, Jon?" She said, straight to business with these men. That was the best way.

"Good morrow, Lady Mainper. Exciting day, ain't it?" Jon was a huge man who looked like he'd crush a horse if he ever rode one himself. Typical of the mountain men in the area, he sported a bushy beard, hair and chest. His brutish appearance had intimidated her when she'd first met him, but Jon was an idiot who couldn't even read. "Meaning of what now?" He asked, lips smacking wetly as he chewed.

"Lady. Why is she being taken out? I want her here. I want all the horses here."

"Oh." The Horse Master glanced up at the herd as if he'd just noticed their departure. "I'm sorry, m'lady, but Master Rikard's orders. M'lord will be bringing more horses than the stables can

cope with. We have to make room for the important ones. Report says he's got over 100 knights with him, each with at least two horses."

"What report?"

"Then there's stewards with one. A few monks with their donkeys. And you can bet those knights have wives, and they ain't walking either." He finished, talking over her.

*Rikard's orders.* That irked her, maybe she should have woken up at the crack of dawn like everyone else. "Well I'm telling you no. Take them all but Lady if you must. What if I wanted to ride today?"

"She'll just be down the cliff, m'lady. I can get one of the boys to fetch her up if you fancy a hack. The horses like to be out anyway, she doesn't get nearly enough exercise."

"I – That's not good enough!" Her voice was turning shrill, yet the chatter of the yard carried on and the horses were already gone.

"Nothing I can do, m'lady. Gotta make room. Let me know when you want to exercise ol' Lady and I'll get the boys to fetch her up the cliff." He gave her a little bow of his head then turned into the stable with a smirk, barking orders at the remaining boys to clean up the dung before he spat again.

Ada wasn't about to follow him in, and was reduced to walking away in defeat. *Rikard's orders.* Who did Rikard think he was? *She* was Lady Mainper. He was some up jumped baker's boy who happened to be good at reading letters.

She gritted her teeth and moved through the castle, up the eastern steps and around another hall to the Northern tower. At the top, she found her steward's office. A little room, it was made smaller still by an abundance of clutter. Piles and piles of papers made from sheep skin, rolled and stacked high along one wall. Carrier pigeons roosted in cages above, threatening to stain her dress at any moment as they cooed and fluttered their wings at her entrance. In the centre a pine table was covered with books and more paper, behind it Rikard sat peering at a letter behind the little metal spectacles he'd sent to the city for.

He rose when he noticed Ada by the door and bowed his head. "My lady, I hope the morning reaches you well. Can I help?"

"Yes, thank you. Rikard. I just – " Ada peered up towards the pigeons and stepped forward, indicating Rikard could take his seat as she sat in the opposite chair. "I just wondered if you had any news from the new capitol. An update on the plague? Or any news of the Queen?"

"Ah. Yes, a bird arrived in the early hours of this morning." He gave her a little smile, but did not move.

"Well, can I see it?"

"Of course, my lady. As soon as Lord Mainper returns and reads the letter himself I would be happy to pass it along to you – with his permission of course."

She felt dizzy and was suddenly wishing she'd eaten her breakfast. More defiance! Never before had so many people said 'no' to her. "Excuse me? Are you refusing to let me read my letters, Rikard?"

"No, Lady Ada. I apologise if I've caused offense – but with my Lord due back any minute, I do not think it necessary you take care of his correspondence any longer."

"I am still Lady Mainper. I'm afraid I have to insist that you show me the letter, Rikard. And the report! I mean, any reports my Lord husband might have sent to me."

"May haps we can discuss this once his lordship returns? He might be happy for you to continue helping him in these affairs."

Ser Rikard gave her a pitying smile that said, 'he definitely wouldn't be happy for you to continue helping in these affairs.' Ada looked at the papers on the desk and considered snapping one up, but he must have seen her gaze, as Rikard rose.

"Shall I walk my lady to her drawing room?" His tone changed to something cold she wasn't used to. He was no longer hers.

"N-No. Thank you, Rikard. I can get there myself... I'm very... grateful for your time."

She avoided eye contact as she left, staring down at her little blue slippers. Ada felt numb, and couldn't remember walking back to her chambers. It was only when Selease returned and found her sitting by the fire, staring at the dying flames, that she realised she'd been hiding there for the rest of the morning.

"My Lady? Ada, are you quite alright?" Selease knelt on the floor beside her, one arm drifting around her shoulders. "Do you want to talk about it?"

She shook her head and they sat in silence, staring at the fire. Selease rubbed her back like she had that morning.

"Why don't we go?" Ada muttered suddenly, the thought just occurring to her.

"Go?"

"Yes. Yes, Selease, we could run away." She took the other girl's hands, shaking them slightly in excitement. "We could leave. Take the horses and hide in the forest. If we make it to my Father's house... he could... he loves me."

Selease's eyes widened and she glanced towards the door as if they'd been caught already.

"No, Ada. We can't. M'lord would find us. He'd find us and bring you back and I'd be hung for taking you. Men aren't so bad. It's just because you've never had it." She kissed her cheek and smiled. "He'll get bored of you once you've got a baby. Then we can play again."

"Once I've had a baby?" She repeated, scoffing. How long would that take? "But... I love you... I... we said the words."

Selease rose and pulled Ada up with her, fixing her skirts and avoiding eye contact. "Yes. I do too. I just... if we ran I'd get the blame. And I can't be a maiden forever. I don't want to be like old Martha. Lord Bosley will bring squires with him and Knights. I could find myself a good match and then –"

"You want to get married." She didn't understand, the tears were pricking at her eyes and Ada bit her lip to stop them. Selease had started to make herself busy, poking the fire back alive with a little smile as if they were discussing the weather.

"If I'm lucky. You could help me, Ada." She added another log and the flames leapt up. "If I had a knight... I could buy me some jewels. Not as nice as yours but nice. I'd get meself a house and have wee ones of my own. Our children could play together, and I wouldn't have to be no handmaiden no more."

Betrayed. She'd been betrayed. She watched her back wide eyed, gasping her breath while her dreams were crushed.

"We'll still be together. We've just got to have our own families now It will be nice, Ada."

Ada stopped listening, stopped crying, and shoved Selease into the fire.

Her head crunched against the logs first, then her hair caught in seconds. She screamed desperately and scrambled away from the flames, hands pushing against burning pine and red hot coals. The room was engulfed with the stank of burning hair, and Ada stepped back from the heat with a hand to her nose.

Two guards ran in from the noise and stared at the situation in horror before the youngest jumped into action. He dropped his spear and ripped his cloak off, covering the squirming Selease with it and batting down on her fiercely.

That was unlucky. She didn't have guards posted outside her door, they would have been doing their rounds when they heard her. Now everything was spoiled and Ada started to cry again.

"She was just fixing the fire." She said, "she tripped... I... oh gods."

"Are you alright, m'lady?" The other guard, Pod she thought his name was, came close and led her away. As she looked back Selease was sobbing under the blanket but the flames were gone.

"I'm fine it was just so frightening. Please, let me take her to Goodman Foster, he'll have salves."

"I'll go ahead m'lady." The boy scooped the little handmaid up into his arms and made to run, but Ada caught his hand, digging her nails into his metal gauntlet.

"No! I must stay with her, she needs me. She needs my comfort. We'll walk together."

She almost forgot about her lord husband's return as Selease consumed the rest of the day. The little traitor wailed for the whole walk across the castle, getting them so many odd looks that Ada was relieved when they made it into Goodman Foster's little room behind the kitchens.

The monk had struggled to pull off the guard's cloak, which had melted onto her face. He asked Ada to leave but she insisted and watched with bated breath as cloth and skin was peeled off the woman's skull.

After that she helped Foster clean the wound then passed him ingredients to make a salve. Garlic, wine and paste from crushed pine. It melted as he applied it onto Selease's oozing cheeks and bald skull. Half her hair was gone, and one eye was a bloody puss the size of a fist. Ada was thankful when the wound had been wrapped in bandages and covered up. She looked down on the perfect side of Selease's face while she slept. Just like this morning.

"She'll have to sleep in my cot tonight." Foster said, a small balding man, he washed his bloody hands in a basin of water. "I'm not sure she'll make it, my lady. I'm sorry to tell you."

"Well I'm sure you'll keep a good watch over her, Foster. She's in safe hands."

"Thank you, my lady. Tripped into a fire you say?"

"Yes. The girl has always been clumsy. I was cold and..." Ada heaved a sob, shaking her head towards the heavens. "I asked her to put another log on the flame. It's my fault."

"Please don't blame yourself, Lady Ada. Clumsy, like you say. I remember Selease as a small girl, she broke her arm climbing trees once, I fixed it for her." Foster looked down on the sleeping handmaid, and Ada was shocked to see tears in his eyes. "She was always clumsy, wasn't she? Fell into the fire. Gods bless her soul."

"You'll let me know if she wakes?"

"Of course, Lady Ada. As soon as she does."

If she does. Ada gave flashed him one of her best smiles, then turned to walk back to her chambers. When she emerged into the courtyard she discovered night had fallen, yet no news of her husband had reached them. Unless it was in a letter she was no longer privy too. She stopped by the stairs to her room, loath to climb the tower and find the fire burning. Instead Ada took the winding route up and around the castle walls. She felt brave enough to gaze down the valley now, and maybe catch a glimpse of her husband's party. Lights twinkled from the town that nestled outside the castle, and if she listened carefully she caught twinkling music. Beyond the town the cliff sloped downwards into darkness, but she knew there was a cobbled road that led down to the woods that dwarfed the landscape. Behind the castle the great mountains of Jagend blocked out most of the stars. The castle was built into their base, making it near impregnable from the Western side, and meaning a trip across the mountains to Castle Skyfell required a long winding route around. A dangerous trip, full of snow storms and monsters.

*Ahoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo*

The horn sounded just as she reached the Eastern parapet and Ada felt a mad rush to run. Run to the woods like she'd begged Release. She froze whilst the castle stirred. Dogs started barking, candles were lit, she heard a gushing of excitement and then the castle sounded a horn in return.

Lord Mainper was home.

## **Chapter Two**

The feast had started late into the night and threatened to continue well into the morning. The train of knights, ladies, soldiers and squires had arrived in the courtyard loud and hungry. As soon as they were relieved of their horses the boisterous crowd had gathered in the hall. There were seats enough for 180, and 100 more had squeezed in anyway to stand and dance and get merry. Some were so young Ada doubted they'd ever even seen Castle Skyfell, yet they all seemed equally excited to be home.

Lord and Lady Mainper feasted their men first on roast duck, poached pears and chilli crusted reindeer. Next came a course of Autumn vegetables and sizzling roast pig dripping with honey.. A serving boy would first take the plates to Lord Bosley Mainper, then Lady Mainper, and then the rest of the court would feast on the lesser cuts. Ada turned away the pig, and scowled to find cook had prepared a lot of dishes she detested. Mutton was in abundance, as well as smoked trout and pickled herring. She'd hoped for some sweet vegetables, and maybe some Swan; Swan was her favourite. Yet Ada's plate remained scarce for the night, with her picking at her food instead of eating it.

The room was hot from the press of bodies. Wood smoke filled the air and stung her eyes, and her nose was bombarded with sweat, ale and damp clothes. She found it hard to breath at the head table, sat stiffly next to her husband as well as Stewart Rosley, Goodman Foster, then five of Mainper's highest ranking Lords and Knights. Dogs prowled under the table for scraps, and a fiddler played the lute in the corner whilst dust travelled men laughed to Sun Strokes tumbling between the tables and juggling cups full of mead.

Ada watched the jester with a little frown. She was tired, with a pounding headache that made her teeth twinge with every throb. They'd been sat together for seven courses, yet the most Bosley had said to her was "you've grown," and "I want you to thank the kitchen staff on my behalf tomorrow." He was much more interested with Rosley on his right, who was updating him on the politics East of the mountains. The clans in the hills had gotten braver, and better armed. There was still no news from the capitol since the outbreak. Rumours of a prophet who could cure the sick were circulating in the villages. Heavy rain had ruined last season's harvest, and stocks were low. Bosley nodded curtly to every tidbit of news, head turned away from her. Does he even remember my name? She risked a glance to her right. He was taller than she remembered, nearer 7" than 6". She'd also remembered her husband having a shock of black hair, but the years apart had seen it grow grey and thin, ending in a sharp widow's peak to match his equally cutting nose. Bosley had pale eyes as well, that seemed to pierce right into her whenever he caught her staring. She quickly turned back to her cold saffron soup and stirred her spoon around the bowl, clinking the clay.

*Chink chink chink.*

Her husband covered her hand under his own, silencing her. Her face heated as he kept it there for a few seconds before letting go.

"I have some news for you, my Lady." He said, Northern accent still thick despite living in the West for so long. "Do you see that young boy over there? Dark hair, he's feeding one of the dogs scraps."

This was the most they'd spoken all night, and Ada was loathed to disappoint him. She scanned the room and found the cretin straight away. No older than nine, the boy had been the youngest member of Bosley's train, and the only child allowed to attend the banquet. She had assumed he was some lesser Lord's favourite.

"Yes." She said, smiling with her cheeks pinched.

"He is my son."

Her mask slipped, mouth opening like a fish. "Your... Your son, My Lord? I... I don't understand."

Her heart began to flutter. Meanwhile Bosley seemed calm, controlled and even a little bored. He looked down at her as if she was the stupidest girl in the kingdom.

"When I left you were a child yourself, Ada." He said, shrugging. "A lot has happened. Robert is my bastard. I'm keeping him here as my ward; I have grown quite fond of the boy."

"I... I see."

"If we have a son, then I will find Robert some land somewhere once he's older. And if you only manage girls, well, then it is good that he's here."

She had nothing to say, she just nodded meekly. Good, was Bosley's reaction, and then that was the end of that. He turned back to Rosley for more news.

Ada stared at the boy with newfound interest. His son. Had she not suffered enough embarrassment? To have his bastard under her roof... to potentially be his heir if she 'only managed girls.'

Her nose fizzled in that way that meant you were about to cry, and she had to look away from the little boy, who was still playing with the dogs. Even Bosley's men seemed fond of him, one old Knight laughed when he stumbled onto the floor and pulled a hound off the lad before

tugging him back to his feet. Another brushed him down with a chuckle, then let him sip from his own goblet.

She wanted to run back to her chambers and spill the news to Selease in a fit of tears. This wasn't how it was supposed to be. Everyone was ignoring her. She was unwanted.

Unappreciated. He had a son. The one thing she could give him and he had it. Dirty and skinny and looking exactly like him, right down to the piercing eyes.

"My Lords!" She stood suddenly, not sure what she was doing, just that every head in the room turned to her. "I am grateful; so grateful that you've brought my Lord Husband back to me." A bead of sweat trickled down her back, she was desperate to scratch it. "Seeing you all now, I find myself overwhelmed with joy to have a full hall once again." She paused and received a polite cheer in return, even though Ada had never known the hall to be full. She took her meals in her private solar. "I propose a tourney!" Her voice went shrill, they were expecting something and she was guessing. "Two moons from now, in my husbands names, to celebrate his return. I hope to see you all jousting for my favor."

Another cheer, this time louder. She smiled and tried to look pretty, raising her wine in a toast then sitting down as soon as she'd taken her dutiful sip.

"Very generous, my lady." Lord Mainper murmured, she had his full attention once again. "Will you be paying for this tourney I wonder?"

"I... I thought it would be fitting. The smallfolk will love to see you after so long."

"Quite right. I might joust myself, for your honor, of course."

She caught his eye, quite sure she heard a hint of sarcasm lacing his words. Bosley's face was marked with wrinkles, mostly frown lines. Unlike most Eastern Lords in the mountains, he kept his cheeks clean shaven except for a thick moustache that was greyer than his hair, and she found his thin lips cruel and mocking; she realised then she'd yet to see him smile.

Despite all that though there was something quite handsome about Lord Mainper. He had an air of intelligence, and self-assurance. He was indifferent to her and it was infuriating. She might have fancied him if she hadn't already decided to loathe him. Ada wasn't sure if she craved more of his attention or wanted none at all. The scraps he did give her were maddening, and she was beginning to wonder if he'd even join her in their matrimonial bed tonight. Did she want him to? No, no. Definitely not. His hands looked large and strong; arms intimidatingly large under his leather tunic. No. She'd rather have the ruined Selease with her oozing boils.

"That is very gracious of you, my lord." She murmured, not sure what else there was to say. The sun was starting to rise, with light slowly spilling through the windows, making the candles redundant. They'd arrived late and feasted for the rest of the night. Maybe she would be spared consummating her marriage?

"You are too kind, Ada. Now if you'll excuse me," he stood, the rest of the room following his lead, when Bosley finished his sentenced he addressed the entire room. "I am retiring to my chambers, my lords. I thank you for accompanying me back to our home. Please, continue and excuse my absence."

His court bowed their heads as he left then retook their seats. The feast carried on. Ada had been left.

Was this punishment for her toast? Was she supposed to follow? She stared at her cold soup, face heating.



"My Lady," Goodman Foster was leaning closer, his breath stinking of onions. "I've been checking on Selease every hour. I didn't think she'd make the night, but she sleeps peacefully."

"She hasn't woken then?"

"Not yet, my lady. I plan on changing her bandages at noon."

"Why do I want to know that?" She snapped.

"I... thought you might wish to assist me again, my lady. My deepest apologies if -"

"No, Foster. I'll leave the dirty work to you. Now if you'll excuse me."

She stood up in such a rush that her chair clattered to the ground. Sir Rikard gave her a courtesy glance but the chatter of the hall did not relent and if anything grew louder as Ada stalked down the hall and to her bedchamber.

She half expected to find him waiting in her bed, but the room was cold and empty. The fire was out, her bed was untouched. Rage boiled her blood and Ada slammed the door, kicked her slippers off and fell onto her blankets with the heaviest sigh she could muster.

Nothing happened. No one came. Neither her husband to claim her, or a handmaiden to take off her dress. Who was supposed to get her a new handmaiden anyhow? Surely that had been arranged for her.

Sitting up, feeling defeated, she glanced to the connecting door between the Lord and Lady's bedchambers. It had always remained unlocked without the threat of a husband looming at the other side, but now she had a mad urge to turn the key and shun him from her space.

She stalked closer, slowly so he couldn't hear. Her hand was reaching out, but Ada found herself gripping the door handle rather than the lock. She could just enter? Maybe that's what he was waiting for. Maybe this is what she wanted all along.

A woman giggled from her husband's room, and she leapt away as if the handle was on fire.

### **Chapter Three**

Despite going from a skeleton crew to being overrun with people, the castle and its people adjusted quickly, all except Ada. She saw less and less of her husband. If he wasn't out hunting he was meeting with various lesser lords to discuss matters she was not privy to. Rikard sent her no letters, the tourney was planned without her, the connecting door in her bedroom remained unlocked and untouched.

Despite this neglect, Ada was not starved for company, and had gained 4 ladies in waiting to replace Selease. Prissy girls from the new capitol, they neither liked or admired her. Constantly they complained about the Northern weather and the smell of the country. Heather missed the royal guards and their golden armour, Kya yearned for the balls her mother used to host, Lizbeth would whine about the shops and Jane reminisced over the theatre. They would talk to each other whilst they combed her hair and dressed her. They travelled in groups, always, and could wait on Ada for an entire day without needing to speak two words to her.

And then there was the other woman. Some nights she heard little giggles and breathless gasps coming from his room. She would roll over in bed and stare at the yellow glow under the connecting door. How much she wanted to see what was happening; and how little she didn't.

Ada took to waking up earlier than usual to try and catch the mystery woman leaving, but when she put her ear to the door she caught nothing but silence. The dark and damp corridors she'd

grown used to were now full of unfamiliar faces. Was it Robert's mother? Or maybe one of her ladies in waiting. Helping her to bed then sneaking next door to fuck her husband. They probably laughed about how stupid she was not to notice.

"I miss the Bishop's monkey. Remember how he use to make it dance?" Heather said over her, plaiting her golden curls into a long braid.

"Hmmm and it's little hat." Kya agreed, plaiting her other braid. "It had fleas though. Mama never let me get too close."

"Pfft. Better than the dogs they let wander about here. I hate eating in the hall with them. Ugh, and if I have to have another bite of mutton I swear I'll choke."

"I don't like mutton either," Ada murmured. She didn't even know why she was trying to be involved, she hated them all.

The girls nodded and hmed, then continued to style her hair in silence. It was supposed to be a great honor to be fostered by such a noble house, yet they thought themselves better than her. She had never even been to the new capital. Born west of the mountains, the pass was considered too dangerous for most.

Problems

Selease

Boy

Future Problems

Mum

Tournament

Wa

Healer (rasputin character)

Lobotomy