**Chapter - 33**

I woke up to the warm sunlight filtering in through the window, feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. I stretched my limbs, feeling a sense of calm wash over me. My gaze fell upon Freya, who was still asleep, looking peaceful as ever. The sight of her lying on top of me brought a smile to my face, reminding me of the wonderful moments we had shared together.

It had only been a few days since my return home from the forest, and Freya had all but moved into the clinic, spending most of her time by my side.

Despite my best efforts, progress had been slow, and I felt frustrated at times. I longed to discover the full extent of my abilities and unleash their true potential.

As I was lost in my thoughts, I heard a soft knock on my door, which jolted me back to reality. Freya stirred slightly, but I gently placed her back on the bed, not wanting to disturb her peaceful slumber.

Quickly putting on my clothes, I made my way to the door, wondering who could be there at this early hour. To my surprise, it was Ned, standing patiently with a sense of urgency etched on his face.

"Good morning, Ned! Come on in. What brings you here so early?" I asked him.

"I received a raven from Dragonstone today," he said. "You're being called back south again."

"What? Why?" I asked, puzzled.

"Stannis' daughter has contracted greyscale," he replied solemnly.

My mind raced as I tried to remember the details of this particular plotline. "How long has it been?" I inquired.

"I'm not sure," Ned admitted, "but the letter mentioned that the maester was able to stop the spread initially, but she seems to have gotten worse after that."

"Will you go?" he asked.

I really didn't want to go. I hadn't even started my dragon project yet, even though my travel time would be much less now that I had figured out how to fly.

On the other hand, it would give me an opportunity to explore Dragonstone. I'm sure I'll be able to uncover something left behind by the Targaryens that is still hidden.

"I do want to help the girl but I just got back, and I don't want to leave so soon again."

"What do you want to do then?"

I gave the matter some thought "Hmm, any chance you can find someone who has greyscale nearby?"

"It might be possible, why?"

"If there is someone who has greyscale, I can study them and make a cure and send it to them instead of going myself." I explained

"Will it be faster?"

"Depends on how fast you can find someone and how close they are."

"I doubt there is anyone in Winterfell who is suffering from greyscale, but I'll have someone ask around just in case."

"Ok, if you find someone soon, then the problem is solved. If not, I'll go to Dragonstone in person."

"Very well," he said as he left.

I went back inside and noticed that Freya was still sleeping. The scene distracted me from all the work I was supposed to be doing.

‘Meh, it's not like I need to go now,’ I thought to myself. I jumped back into bed to cuddle with Freya for a few more hours.

I felt like I was forgetting something, but I just shrugged it off. Whatever it was, I would deal with it later.

After some time I couldn't go back to sleep so I left a note instead of waking Freya and made my way out. I had the feeling that I was probably going to end up on my way to Dragonstone soon, so I might as well take a walk around Winterfell for some fresh air.

I reached the edge of town and just sat on a wall looking at the clouds drifting by and my thoughts wandered back to my forest .

There was a house there now in the clearing that I had first landed in that I had employed my rats to build, made up of bricks and mud. They were still working diligently like ants on expanding the house. I would eventually build a bigger one after I could use my abilities on plants, but it would do for now.

I had figured out some things about the effects of my new heart. I had gained absolute control over fire. It had sort of merged in a weird way with my actual powers. The aura that flared up around me when I wanted to was actually a fire. I just didn't realize it because it didn't burn anything unless I wanted it to.

I could even heal people with my flames, so now I could actually make the healing pyre that I had set up in King's Landing as a distraction.

Setting things on fire was fun and oddly therapeutic. No wonder there was an entire religion based on setting things on fire. Best not to go down that rabbit hole for now.

As I thought of ways to get better with my magic, I realized I needed to get my hands on some Valyrian texts about magic to gain a better understanding.

While I could have gone to the Citadel where I was sure to find some books the greedy rats had been hiding away, I had already made plans to deal with them and didn't want to risk those plans by going there just yet.

Lost in thought, I made my way back to the clinic where I found Freya making something.

"What smells so good?" I asked, intrigued by the delicious aroma wafting through the air.

“Pasta”

“What's the occasion?”

"The occasion is your leaving again," she replied, not even bothering to look up from the pot she was stirring.

"How do you know?" I inquired, surprised by her blunt response.

"I have my ways," she retorted with a sly smile.

"Won't be as long as last time, just a few days," I assured her, hoping to put her at ease.

"I thought you were going to Dragonstone," she said, her eyes narrowing in suspicion.

"I am," I confirmed with a nod.

"So how will you be back in a few days?" she asked, her tone challenging me to come up with a convincing answer.

"I have my ways," I repeated, a mischievous grin spreading across my face.

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It was with great anticipation that he awaited the arrival of the mercenaries he had hired to carry out his plan on the outskirts of White Harbor.

He loathed the fact that he had to come this far north for knowledge but he was willing to make the sacrifice.

His heart was set on acquiring whatever secrets the Mage had taught the girl, and he had already envisioned the wealth of information he would gain from them.

He had seen the notes sent by Maester Luwin to the Citadel, discussing the cause of various diseases, and he was eager to delve deeper into that knowledge.

As the hours passed by and the hired mercenaries failed to show up, a sense of disappointment and frustration began to take hold of him. He had been counting on obtaining valuable knowledge from them, and the thought of his plan failing was a bitter pill to swallow. However, he consoled himself that he could always send more mercenaries to get the job done correctly.

But he knew that this was just a minor setback in their grand scheme. Their ultimate objective was to get rid of the White Mage, as they believed that magic had no place in the new world that the masters had been trying to build for centuries. To achieve this, he and his fellow maesters had been working on a potent form of poison that could even kill a dragon. They planned to use it to erase the White Mage's from history.

Although losing the chance to gain the Mage’s knowledge was regrettable, he believed that it was a small price to pay for their ultimate goal. They could always obtain the information they needed later. He was determined to learn everything he could to satisfy his curiosity, no matter the cost.

However, his disappointment was short-lived as a figure appeared in the distance, making its way towards him. The sight of the mercenary he had hired filled him with a glimmer of hope that his trip had been worth it after all. But as the figure drew closer, he realized that the man was in a terrible state. His body was covered in cuts and bruises, his feet bare and bleeding. The sight of the battered mercenary sent a chill down his spine, and he knew that something had gone terribly wrong.

"What happened? Where is the girl? Were you caught?" he asked, desperate for answers.

The mercenary's reply was grim. "Yes, we were caught. Everyone else is dead. I was able to escape by playing dead until he left," the mercenary said, his voice hoarse and strained.

He felt a knot form in his stomach as the mercenary's words sank in. "Did the healer catch you?" he asked, his mind racing with possibilities.

At the mention of the mage, the mercenary's body shuddered in fear. "That man was no healer. He was a monster. There was nothing simple about him. He killed everyone else," the mercenary said before he started vomiting blood.

As he knelt beside the wounded mercenary, he could see the fear and desperation in the man's eyes.

"Help me," he pleaded.

But before he could even respond, the mercenary's body convulsed and he began bleeding from every orifice. The scene that unfolded before him was something out of a nightmare. He caught the dying man and tried to get more answers out of him, but it was all for naught as he watched the life drain from his body.

As he frantically tried to stem the bleeding, the mercenary's labored breathing grew weaker and more ragged. Despite his best efforts, it was clear that the man's injuries were too severe. And then, with a final, desperate gasp, the mercenary's body went limp.

He sat there in stunned silence, staring at the lifeless form before him. The reality of what had just happened hit him like a ton of bricks, and he couldn't help but shudder in horror and fear.

He knew that he needed to get out of there before he was seen next to the dead mercenary. As he tried to wipe the blood off his clothes, he failed to notice a shimmer in the air hovering above him. It followed him as he stumbled out of the abandoned warehouse, his mind racing with questions and doubts.

The world around him seemed to blur as he tried to make sense of what had just happened. He had never been in a situation like this before, and he was struggling to keep it together. The sound of his own footsteps echoed in the empty streets, and he couldn't shake the feeling that he was being watched.

But he didn't have time to dwell on it. He needed to focus on his escape, to find a way out of this forsaken place before it was too late.

**Chapter - 34**

As I bid farewell to Freya, I strode towards the keep, hopeful that Ned had discovered some promising news. I found him conversing with Luwin, his face heavy with disappointment.

"Have you found anyone?" I inquired, already knowing the answer by the look on his face.

"No, we haven't," Ned responded with a rueful sigh. "Anyone afflicted with greyscale is sent off to Essos almost immediately to prevent the spread of the disease here."

I nodded in understanding, having expected that. "Then I shall make my way to Dragonstone," I said with a sigh.

"When will you leave?" Ned inquired.

"Now, there's no sense in delaying it any longer."

"Will Fenrir accompany you?"

"No, I have a faster method this time," I replied, a small smile tugging at the corners of my lips.

"I shall return in a few days, Ned, Maester Luwin."

They looked at me in confusion but didn't question me.

I exited the keep and walked at a sedate pace to the nearest treeline. Once I was certain that no one could see me, I spread my wings and took to the sky, soaring towards Dragonstone.

The journey had started off exciting, but as time passed, it grew monotonous. I had no idea how much longer it would take to reach Dragonstone, but I remained certain that it wouldn't take more than a day.

As I soared through the clouds, the rocky island finally came into view. The imposing fortress perched atop the island took my breath away. Its magnificence was awe-inspiring, and I couldn't help but murmur to myself, "Now that is a castle."

<Dragonstone>

A grin spread across my face, "When all hell breaks loose, I'm definitely claiming this beauty as mine."

As I set foot on the island of Dragonstone, I felt a thrill of excitement run through me. The air was crisp, and the wind carried the strong scent of sea salt. The island was rugged and barren, with steep cliffs and rocky caves dotting the landscape.

I had purposefully landed on the opposite side of the port away from prying eyes. I began making my way towards the castle, my eyes scanning the terrain for anything interesting along the way.

Inside, the cave was dimly lit, but I could see shiny black stones that made up the walls of the cave. I got an odd feeling from the rock, so I broke off a piece from the wall. A strange feeling washed over me, telling me to channel my magic through the rock. So, I did just that, and immediately the rock started melting. But instead of dripping through my hands, it stayed on my hands and I could see the now liquid rock twitch with every flare of my magic.

‘Huh, that's unexpected. I wonder why dragonglass behaves like that,’ I thought to myself.

I played around with it for a bit and then went back on my way to the castle, my mind buzzing with the possibilities of what I could do with this new information.

I finally reached the entrance of the castle after an hour of walking. However, I was stopped by a group of guards who fixed their suspicious gazes on me. Calmly, I informed them of my purpose and that I had been summoned by Lord Stannis. One of the guards nodded and motioned for me to follow him, and I eagerly complied.

As we made our way through the castle, I couldn't help but marvel at its imposing structure. The dark and brooding fortress seemed to emanate an aura of power and mystery, and I felt a thrill of excitement run through me. This was the place where it had all begun, and I wanted to explore every inch of it to unlock all of its secrets.

<Throne>

As I entered the Throne Room, I caught sight of Stannis Baratheon for the second time in my life. He wore the same stern expression, but there was a flicker of disbelief in his eyes upon seeing me. It was understandable; he likely hadn't expected me to arrive so soon.

"How did you manage to get here so quickly? The message was only sent to Winterfell yesterday," he asked, his voice laced with surprise.

"I heard of your plight and came as fast as I could," I replied, not wanting to elaborate on my mode of transportation.

Stannis looked like he wanted to ask more, but he dropped the matter, nodded, and motioned for me to follow him deeper into the castle.

We eventually arrived at a room where a girl lay on a bed, trembling with fever.

It was clear that she was gravely ill.

Approaching the girl lying on the bed, I could tell that the disease was still in its early stages. Though her skin was darkening, the cracks were not as numerous. However, I knew that with time, the marks would spread, and the skin would become dead and gray.

The maester standing next to her appeared surprised by my presence, but he quickly composed himself and launched into a detailed account of the patient's condition, the treatments he had administered, and her current state.

Although the maester's explanation wasn't necessary, I appreciated the gesture. He seemed to be a skilled and dedicated professional, one of the good ones.

Gently, I placed my hand on the girl's arm, closing my eyes to focus my attention on the disease. Grayscale was a devastating affliction caused by a microbe that slowly consumed the victim's flesh. It was notoriously difficult to treat, and there was no known cure.

Stannis looked at me with a steady gaze. "Can you heal her?" he asked.

Without hesitation, I replied, "Yes."

I wanted to try something different from my usual method, so instead of relying solely on my healing powers, I decided to use a bit of magic.

A small white flame appeared at the end of my finger, and I gently touched the girl's forehead. The flame spread across her skin, eradicating the disease and replacing the dead, blemished skin with unblemished, healthy skin.

I heard a gasp of surprise behind me, but I didn't pay it any mind. I was focused on the task at hand, and nothing could distract me.

After a few moments, the flames died down, and I withdrew my finger. I gave the girl one last scan to make sure that everything was as it should be, then stepped back.

The room was filled with silence as everyone waited with bated breath for Shirren to wake up.

It didn't take long. Her eyes fluttered open, and she looked around, clearly surprised to see so many people in the room. But her eyes widened in recognition as she saw me.

The young girl gazed up at me with wide eyes, her voice full of wonder. "Are you the White Mage?" she asked, her words laced with hope and anticipation.

A smile crept across my lips as I met her gaze. "Yes, my dear. I am the one they call the White Mage," I replied, offering her a small nod.

"But you can call me El," I added with a playful wink.

The girl's giggles filled the room, but her expression quickly shifted to one of concern. "I'm not sick anymore?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

With a reassuring smile, I told her. "You're going to be just fine."

The girl's mother rushed over to her daughter and hugged her tightly, muttering words of gratitude towards me. Recognizing their need for privacy, I quietly slipped out of the room, followed by Maester Cressen.

“I have heard a lot about your healing abilities, Ser Healer, but seeing them in person is something else entirely. I am Maester Cressen. If you don't mind, I have some questions regarding healing that I am curious about,” he said, unable to hide the excitement in his voice.

“It's good to meet you too, Maester Cressen. I'm always happy to share my knowledge. Ask away,” I replied.

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Stannis Baratheon had never felt such relief as he did at that moment even though he tried his best not to show it at that . The white flames produced by the healer that he had recognized from King's Landing had worked wonders, curing his daughter of the incurable disease that had been plaguing her in mere moments. He watched as his daughter slowly sat up in bed, her complexion returning to a healthy glow.

He saw his wife run up to their daughter, embracing her tightly. He knew she had been silently worrying herself sick over their daughter's condition, and he couldn't be more grateful that everything had turned out alright.

Once he was sure his daughter was well enough to be left alone, he made his way out of the room to speak with the healer. He found the man in question speaking to Maester Cressen, and approached him.

"Is there anything I need to take care of regarding my daughter?" Stannis asked directly, wanting to make sure he didn't miss anything important.

The healer nodded. "Yes, she will be a bit weak for a few days, and she'll need to eat enough for two people in that time."

Stannis nodded his head, taking in the information. "Thank you," he said. "You have done me a great favor, what would you like in return? If it is within my power I shall have it granted."

The healer looked at him for a moment, considering his words. "Actually," he said after a moment, "There is something I would like in exchange."

The healer continued. "I would like to stay in this castle for a day or two to explore," he said, a glint of excitement in his eye.

Stannis was taken aback by the simplicity of the request. "Is that all?" he asked, incredulous.

The healer hesitated before responding, "Well, actually there is one more thing. I have a keen interest in dragonglass. If you could send whatever amount you see fit to Winterfell, I would consider your debt repaid."

Stannis was taken aback by the healer's modest request, but he quickly agreed nonetheless. "Consider it done," he said, his voice laced with gratitude.

"I can have someone escort you if you wish to explore Dragonstone," Stannis offered.

The healer declined with a sly grin. "No need for that, Lord Stannis. The best exploration is always done alone," he said mischievously.

Stannis raised an eyebrow at the healer's boldness. Despite feeling slightly uncomfortable at the thought of someone wandering around his castle unsupervised, he couldn't refuse the man who had just cured his daughter of an incurable disease.

"Very well, feel free to approach the guards if you require anything."

**Chapter - 35**

Now, if I went about it the old-fashioned way, it would probably take me a few years before I found anything interesting.

So, I went with the most obvious solution: lots of rats.

It seemed like they were going to be the solution to most of my problems in life.

I also created a few small insects, mostly to keep track of everyone in the castle while the rats dig through every nook and corner.

After unlocking my magic, I had figured out how to warg into my animals.

I had gotten the template for it years ago from the Stark children, but I hadn't been able to figure it out completely because it had a magical component that was responsible for transmitting and receiving data through the air.

Now, I could finally use it to send commands and receive data directly.

Initially, I had been using pheromones and gestures to give commands based on the instructions I had programmed into their brains.

Skitter and Fenrir were the exceptions to that, as they had beyond basic intelligence. They had the ability to learn.

While walking aimlessly in the castle, I gradually created about a hundred rats and let them run loose.

Once I decided that I had created a sufficient amount, I decided to warg into all of them, and immediately regretted it.

The visual data of a hundred rats was way too much to handle at once, and I instantly got a headache.

So, I canceled the connection, took a moment and started to do it slowly, one by one, instead.

I picked a nice spot to sit and continue to look around the castle from a hundred different points of views.

After scouring through various rooms for almost an hour, I finally stumbled upon something intriguing.

I stood up and traced the rat's location until I reached some sort of store room.

But there was a wall between where my rat was, and I couldn't just go around breaking open some walls or crawl through the tiny hole my rat had used to get in.

So using my resourceful rats, I scoured the area for any clues that could lead me to a mechanism capable of unlocking the wall. After some intense searching, one of my furry companions discovered a tile that triggered the hidden door.

As I entered the dark, foreboding hallway beyond the wall, I realized that my enhanced vision was barely enough to pierce through the gloom. Nonetheless, my curiosity drove me forward, eager to unravel the secrets that lay ahead.

As I cautiously made my way inside, I immediately felt that something was off about the place. There was no breeze, no sound, and no light.

Suddenly, as I took a step forward, I started to fall. I landed on some spikes meant to skewer me, but they bent on contact with my skin instead.

"That's embarrassing. It's literally the oldest trap in the book," I muttered to myself, realizing how easily I had fallen for such a simple trap.

As I surveyed my surroundings, I realized that I wasn't the only one who had fallen for this trap. There were a few skeletons scattered on the floor, clearly ancient and aged beyond a century.

There was nothing else to see in the pit so I easily leapt out and continued onward.

Pretty soon It was obvious that I was in some sort of Indiana Jones movie, complete with wire traps, arrow launchers, and boulders.

I had fun setting off every trap in my path.

However, as I approached what I hoped was the final room, I noticed that the trap was different.

It had a magical essence to it, and I figured brute forcing my way through this trap was maybe not the smartest idea.

I couldn't wait to find out what was waiting for me at the end of this obstacle course. It had to be something significant, given the effort someone took to hide it.

I walked closer to the door and studied what appeared to be runes written on the ground surrounding the door. I had no clue what language they were written in, but they looked menacing enough that I didn't really want to stick my hand in and find out what they did.

I looked down at the rat that had found this place, and it looked back at me innocently. I sighed and said, "Well, I don't really need you to walk into it. Just flick your tail past the line, and I'll grow you a new one if something bad happens."

While I could just command the rat to yeet itself into possible death, this way, I wouldn't feel bad about it.

The rat walked towards the rune line, and flicked its tail above the runes and a blood-red wall flared up and disintegrated the tail.

The rat squealed and ran straight behind me.

I grabbed the little guy to study what had happened, and I realized that the tail had been completely disintegrated.

Now I found myself in a pickle, as I had no magical knowledge to intellectually poke at the problem, and there was no way I was leaving whatever was behind that door alone.

So, I started doing what I do best, trying to find dumb solutions to serious problems.

After a couple of minutes of me throwing random things I got my hands on towards the invisible barrier and getting the same result, I got an idea.

I looked at the stone floor and thought,

"There's no way they didn't think of that, right?"

“...I don't really have a better idea so might as well.”

I called all the rats I had created and had them start digging. They were progressing very slowly, so I helped them out by punching the rocks and softening up the floor.

To my delight, and a little disappointment at the simple loophole I had found, it worked.

The barrier didn't extend underground.

So after celebrating my genius with a little dance, I waited for the rats to finish digging the tunnel and crawled my way to the other side.

I braced myself for some grand discovery, but instead found myself in an empty room with nothing but a solitary pedestal in the center.

"Huh, that's unexpected. I was honestly expecting mountains of gold, Valyrian steel, or even, dragon eggs" I muttered to myself.

Looking at the only object in the room, I made my way towards the imposing pedestal at the center.

As I drew closer, I could feel an intense energy emanating from the ancient tome that rested upon it. The book seemed to pulse with an eerie, almost hypnotic power that both intrigued and unsettled me.

I approached it slowly. Though the book was clearly ancient, its pages were pristine and unblemished, as if it had only just been bound.

Despite my curiosity, I could not decipher the strange symbols that adorned the cover, save for a few characters that bore resemblance to the archaic High Valyrian script. The rest remained a mystery.

I reached out to touch the Grimoire, and as my fingers brushed against its surface, I felt a sharp prick on my finger, and a drop of blood was drawn into the cover.

Suddenly, the book violently opens and pages start fluttering by before stopping abruptly and a silky voice echoes through the chamber.

"Who might you be?" The voice sent a shiver down my spine, and I slowly lifted my gaze to behold a figure floating before me.

<Image>

I was taken aback by the sight before me. Floating there, draped in a flowing robe of deepest black, was a woman of sinful beauty. Her skin was flawless, her curves seemingly crafted by the gods themselves, lending her an almost otherworldly appearance. But it was her striking features that held my gaze captive - those playful eyes, glinting mischievously as if they held the secrets of the universe, seemed to peer directly into my soul.

For a moment, I was transfixed by her presence, unable to speak or even move. I could feel the weight of her gaze upon me, and I knew that I had stumbled upon something far beyond what I was looking for.

But before I could fully process the situation, she cleared her throat, drawing my attention back to her face.

Seeing my stunned expression, she continued, "You are not a Targaryen, but your veins run thick with powerful dragon blood."

"It's polite to introduce oneself before asking for their name," I replied, trying to buy some time. My mind was running a hundred miles an hour trying to figure out what sort of situation I had ended up in.

With a hint of amusement in her eyes as she noticed my still distracted state, she answered,

"My name is Vaylara".

That didn't really help me figure out who she was at all.

"Greetings, Vaylara," I said. "You can call me El."

“Hello El, You have no idea how long it has been since i spoke to someone”

I really wanted to ask her what the fuck she was because she was clearly not human given how much magic i felt was coming off her, and there was something very odd about the way she spoke so I had to be a bit careful here.

"So what led to… you know, you're living in a book situation?" I ask her hoping to get more information.

"Oh, it's a typical story," she sighed. "One moment, you're pulling a prank on an asshole who doesn't know how to take a joke, and the next, he seals you away and forgets about you.”

“Must've been boring.” I say distractedly.

“At times, but eventually some idiots stumbled upon my book and I taught them how to build a civilization until some idiot ended up setting everything on fire." she said in annoyance

That answered some of my questions but gave me a million more "So you're telling me that you taught the Valryians everything they knew?” I asked her with a hint of doubt in my tone.

“Yes, But I didn't really teach them anything important, The idiots' would have destroyed the planet eventually if I did, that would have just left me to drift off into space without any source of entertainment.”

That had a lot more implications than what I was ready to deal with for now so I settled on asking simple questions, “So how did you end up sealed in this room on Dragonstone?"

"Even though the Targaryens were not a prominent family in Valriya they did know about my existence so after the doom they came back to dig through whatever they could find and brought me here. Visenya Targaryen was the last person I spoke to," she explained. "Her son wasn't interested in magic and had little capability to use any. And she would have sooner destroyed my book before giving it to anyone else," she added with annoyance.

"So, I take it that you're not a fan of the Targaryens. You'll be thrilled to know they don't rule the Seven Kingdoms anymore," I said.

She looked genuinely surprised, but her expression quickly turned to one of intrigue. "Huh, what happened to them?" she asked.

"In short, they lost their dragons due to a succession crisis, then went batshit insane," I replied.

She took a moment to process what I said before bursting into maniacal laughter.

It took her a few moments to eventually stop laughing.

"Please tell me everything!" she begged.

I was happy to oblige “The Targaryens ruled for around three centuries, thanks to their dragons. But when the dragons died out due to infighting between half siblings? Cousins? whatever I don't really remember, over who could sit on the pointy chair. It eventually led to all out war when Aerys Targaryen also known as the Mad King went insane and burnt a Lord Paramount alive” I sat down on the floor as I narrated the story till the present status of Targaryens.

“So you're telling me the only Targaryens alive are three kids one of who is insane, one is eventually going to go insane and the other one doesn't even know who he is and thinks he is a Stark bastard” She asked in disbelief.

“Yup.“

She continued laughing.

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A/N: Hey guys! Sorry about the long wait. I had actually finished 80% of the chapter two days ago but for some reason (alcohol) I couldn't really sit down and finish it. Anyway I'm sorry again and I hope you like the chapter.

**Chapter - 36**

The ancient tome had been closed for centuries, hidden away and she who was trapped within had lost all track of time. But when the book was opened once again, she sensed something different in the air. The magic that flowed from the reader's blood was dense and powerful, unlike any she had encountered before.

As she studied him, she realized that this would be an interesting few years. She had been waiting for someone like him to come along, someone with the raw potential to learn the secrets of magic that she held within.

But he was wary of her, and she couldn't yet fathom why.

Then again, considering her interactions with this world’s inhabitants, a healthy amount of paranoia might just be a smart way to not end up dead or worse.

She was a being from a different world, stranded in this medieval, magic-starved land, and he was the first person in centuries to stumble onto her book.

Despite his dense magic, she could sense that it was untrained and raw. And she knew that she could teach him things that would make him even more powerful.

The thought of what she could teach him sent shivers down her spine.

Until now, she had only taught magic out of desperation or boredom. But with this new student, she saw the potential to finally be free from the infernal book that had trapped her for so long.

"So, you're a magician?" he asked, still wary of the being before him.

"That is a simple way to define what I am, so let's go with that for now," she replied cryptically.

He couldn't help but feel intrigued by the prospect of learning magic from a being that had been trapped in a book for centuries. "And you want to teach me how to use my magic?"

"Yes," she said, with a hint of exasperation in her voice. "The way you're using it now is frankly insulting, and I'm still baffled that it works. The things I can teach you will make you a living god."

He couldn't deny that the prospect was tempting, but he had to ask, "And you will do this out of the goodness of your heart?"

"Well, there is one thing I would like you to do for me once you cross a certain threshold," she said, her voice dropping to a whisper.

"And that is?" he asked, leaning in closer.

"Free me from this book," she said, her eyes locking onto him.

"Well… I can't say I didn't see that coming, but from what I have learned, messing with sentient books never really ends well for anyone involved," he said, still unsure about what he was getting himself into.

“How many sentient books have you run into?!” she asked in disbelief.

"You're the first one, but I have heard stories," he replied cryptically.

"Oh, really? What sort?" she asked, intrigued.

"Meh, we can discuss that some other day. And don't try to change the subject," he dismissed her question, his focus returning to the matter at hand.

She pouted. "Fine, be that way. I can give you my word that nothing bad will happen to you if you learn what I will teach you and follow the process. And since this is probably going to take around a decade anyway, you can judge for yourself in that time if this is some sort of elaborate plan to kill you or something so basic."

He contemplated her words for a while. "Fine, you teach me magic, and in return, I'll take you out of this empty room and eventually free you from your book once I'm sure that you aren't trying to kill me."

"We have a deal," she replied, a hint of excitement creeping into her voice.

"Wonderful. It's been a while since anyone in the castle has seen me, so it's best if I leave now," he said, standing up and grabbing the book.

"Quick question, when I take the book out with me, will others be able to see you?"

"Only if I want them to," she replied with a sly grin.

"Then could you please not do so? People are not really very fond of anything magic in this day," he pleaded, hoping she would understand the risks involved.

"Sure, no problem. I can make it so that only you can see me," she replied, granting his request.

“Just to be clear I'm not cursed or going to be cursed right?”

She rolled her eyes, “Not anymore.”

He paused in his “What do you mean not anymore?”

“I mean you would have been cursed if you had no aptitude for magic when you touched the book” she said nonchalantly.

“And you're telling me this now??”

“You're the one who touched the clearly magical book hidden in a dungeon.”

He thought about that for a second before accepting his mistake “You are right my bad, so there's gonna be no more curses then?”

“Nope”

Relieved, he reached out to pick up the hefty grimoire when she suddenly asked, "I'm curious, who is the Lord of Dragonstone right now?"

"That would be Stannis Baratheon, the king's brother," he replied, wondering where this was going.

"So, what are you doing in Dragonstone? You told me you were from the North," she pressed further.

"Oh, Stannis's daughter was afflicted with grayscale, and I was asked to come here to heal her," he explained, noticing her stunned expression.

“...”

"I may have forgotten to mention that I'm a pretty good healer?" He said with a smirk

Her disbelief turned into curiosity, and she leaned forward, asking, "You can already control your magic to such a degree that you can purge others of diseases even the likes of greyscale? What method did you use?"

He hesitated for a moment, knowing that explaining the intricacies of his original powers would take some time. "It's a little complicated to explain," he said with a sheepish look on his face.

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Varys made his way slowly across the long hallways, thinking of the new plans he had to make and abandoning his old ones because things were moving faster than he had expected. For the hundredth time, he cursed the mage in his head.

Littlefinger had been useful to him at times. Of course, he had known about Littlefinger embezzling from the crown, but because he was predictable, Varys had been able to manipulate him to do some of his work. Him getting caught was something he had not seen coming. Jon Arryn had been clever enough, and his little birds hadn't so much as heard a whisper of what had been happening until it was too late.

While Littlefinger getting caught had been problematic, his escape was even more of an issue because now Varys could no longer keep an eye on the slippery rat.

He walked closer to his destination and could hear the loud voice of the king yelling and punching the table, but it was nothing surprising as the same thing had been going on for the last five days.

“How utterly useless are all of you! It's been a week since that pissant just up and disappeared from the black cells, and none of you morons have any clue where the fuck he is!”

Unfortunately, that's when he entered the small council chambers, and the king's eyes turned to him.

"About time you got here, Varys. I hope for your sake that you were busy finding where that thieving cunt is hiding or who helped him in the first place."

“Unfortunately, no, Your Grace, but I do have some news related to the matter.”

Varys knew exactly who was behind the escape. Lisa Arryn was not one to be subtle, but he couldn't reveal the truth.

Not yet at least.

If he did, there was a risk of starting a war before his plans were ready to exploit the chaos it would cause. Nevertheless, he had to give the king some information before he lost his patience with him.

"Well, out with it then," the king demanded.

"My little birds have told me that Baelish had been anticipating his capture ever since the healer left, so he had planned his escape in case he got caught," Varys reported.

"He was aided by the men he had bribed, and they fled on a merchant vessel bound for Braavos."

The king's frustration was palpable. "Just wonderful. Your information is always late and useless, as usual."

Thankfully he didn't press him for more information and moved on to another matter.

"How is the search for the stolen gold going?" the king asked.

"It's going slowly, Your Grace," Jon Arryn responded. "We have managed to recover only a fraction of the stolen wealth in the form of Baelish's properties. We even found a few pits hidden beneath his establishments where he may have stashed the gold, but it seems to have been cleared out recently."

"Of course it has. Not only has the little shit escaped from King's Landing, but he also ran away with all my gold!" the king roared, throwing his cup against the wall and shattering it, spilling whatever wine was left in the cup.

The king's outburst left the room in a state of tense stillness. Varys, and the others on the council knew better than to speak in such moments of rage, but the silence only seemed to enrage the king further.

"Someone had better have some good news for me, or I'm going to start bashing in people's heads!" the king threatened.

"Considering the amount of gold stolen and the urgency with which Baelish fled, it's unlikely that he made off with all of it," Jon Arryn offered his opinion.

"He must have escaped with a portion and hidden the rest elsewhere. We will be sending an envoy to the Iron Bank to explain the situation to them. Hopefully, they will be able to hunt down Petyr in Essos and find the gold to settle our debt with them while we look for the remaining gold."

The king's anger seemed to abate slightly upon hearing this plan. "Very well," he acknowledged.

"If anyone can find that weasel and our gold, it's them. But mark my words, if we don't find him and get my gold back, heads will roll."

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A/N: Hey everyone… I know I fucked up, but real life caught up with me, and I didn't have anywhere else left to escape. So I had to buckle down and sort out my stuff before I could get back to writing. But because I was so out of sync, it took way longer than it should have. Is this what a writer's block is… I'm not really sure. You'll find out soon enough I guess.

Anyway, I won't bore you with any more excuses. I can't promise that I'll be posting a chapter every three days again, as I would have to have already written at least one chapter in advance for that. I can only promise that I will try my best to get back to the old schedule.