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Daeron hugged his daughter close to his chest as muffled screams came from the other side of the closed door. He couldn't help but grimace as the painful screams tugged at his heart. The only reason he was sitting composed outside the birthing chamber was because his young daughter Alyssa was sleeping soundly on his shoulder. His daughter's steady breaths kept him calm while Daenerys was suffering the pain of birthing their third child into the world.

"Your grace. I could take the princess to her bed." a maid offered.

"Thank you, Rhea. For now, let her sleep like this." Daeron said, petting his daughter's silver locks.

"Yes, your grace." the maid bowed.

He didn't say he was unwilling to let go of his daughter from his hands because her weight on his shoulder was comforting. It kept him grounded and warded off the fear he was feeling on account of his wife's painful screams. However, Sansa's knowing look let him know he was not as successful in masking his feelings.

He wondered when Sansa learned to read him so easily.

'Perhaps being a mother has changed her in many ways.' he mused.

Fatherhood certainly brought many changes in himself. The unlimited powers that he accumulated after his bloody campaign in Westeros were wholly corruptible. He would've let the power consume him whole if he hadn't been blessed with a son after the Long Night. But being a father taught him the need for patience and caution. He also wanted to set an example for the child and have his son look at him with pride rather than fear.

It was such thoughts that guided him in shaping the policies that followed. The vast powers that he gathered were slowly diluted, and in their stead, he propped up the Justicars into a judicial body. For now, the arbitration courts of the Justicars were only found within the borders of the Crownlands. But that'd soon change with more Justicars and courts expanding into the rest of Westeros in the coming decades.

If Aemon's birth taught him the value of sharing his power and empowering the people of the kingdom, the birth of Alyssa taught him to care more about his subjects. Instead of seeing the people of Westeros as a means to preserve his wealth and power, he saw them as his flock. For the first time, he wanted the virtuous to thrive in his kingdom so that children could live in a world rich in virtue.

'When the virtuous thrive, there is no room for suffering.' Daeron thought.

The excited chatter that came from the hallway attracted his attention. As expected, he found Arya leading his son Aemon and nephew Robb. Aemon inherited his black hair, but his eyes were the same shade of amethyst as Daenerys. His nephew Robb took after his mother with dark red hair and blue eyes.

For a moment, Daeron was reminded of a distant memory of himself and Robb.

But that memory shattered like glass when his son pushed his dragon egg against his hand.

“Father, we picked the egg.” Aemon smiled toothily at him while presenting the egg.

Daeron smiled at his brightly smiling son and inspected the egg. It had bright yellow scales on its surface.

“Did Rhaegal give you any trouble?” he asked.

“Of course not. Rhaegal loves my visits.” Aemon said.

“Of course.” Daeron smiled indulgently while trying hard not to laugh at the ‘visits’ his son mentioned.

He wouldn’t exactly call painting the scales of a fully grown battle-hardened dragon in bright yellow and red as friendly visits. The only reason Rhaegal tolerated such ‘visits’ was because of their bond. The green dragon knew Aemon was his son and, therefore, tolerated some level of playfulness. But it was fast becoming time to curb some of Aemon’s activities. He had never allowed his son to do the same with Drogon or Viserion because they were less understanding of Aemon. Dragons were proud creatures, and he was sure Rhaegal was quickly losing patience with Aemon’s stunts.

“You keep it. We can have the egg placed in the crib once the baby comes.” said Daeron, passing the egg to his son’s custody.

“Will the baby be a boy, uncle? I hope it’ll be a boy.” Robb smiled innocently at him.

“Why do you want the baby to be a boy, Robb?” he asked, smiling indulgently at his nephew.

“Because we’ll get to play knights with him,” said Robb, like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

Daeron’s eyes danced with mirth as he heard Arya let out a snort of laughter while Sansa smiled at Robb’s answer.

“And you two want me to have one of those?” Arya asked with a snort.

“I’m glad to see that your rudeness is persistent, sister.” Sansa sniped back.

“I have two nephews and a niece. Soon, that number will go up when Dany delivers the child, and Alys delivers Rickon’s child a few months from now. I think I’ve got enough children in my life, thank you very much.” said Arya.

“I’ll keep reminding you to have a family of your own for your own sake because you are my sister, and I don’t want to see you hurt several decades from now. One day, you’ll wake up and realise what you missed, and I don’t want to feel guilty when that happens.” said Sansa.

“I’ll be sure to wallow in my hypothetical self-pity far away from your eyesight.” Arya mocked.

Before Sansa could respond, a scream came from the closed door, and then all was silent. The silence hung heavy, and it was broken by the cries of a baby. Sansa rushed towards the doorway while Arya held back the boys.

Daeron waited patiently as the maesters and midwives helped clean up the baby and his wife after the birth. While he was overcome with the urge to pay a visit to his wife and newborn child, the sleeping form of Alyssa kept him grounded.

Nearly half an hour later, Sansa came out of the birthing chamber with a broad smile that eased many of his worries.

“Daenerys and the babe are safe and healthy.” said Sansa, making Daeron let out the breath he was holding.

“I’ll take Alyssa. Go and be with your wife.” said Sansa, taking his daughter from his hands.

He carefully stepped into the birthing chamber, taking measured steps as the floor was wiped clean with water after the birth of his child. He found Daenerys and his newborn child lying down on a feather bed covered in silk sheets.

“It’s as I dreamed. We have another daughter.” Daenerys smiled weakly at him from her bed.

“Good.” Daeron let out a relieved laugh. “I’m having trouble disciplining Aemon with all his antics. A daughter like Artie would go a long way of making all of our lives much simpler.”

“You’ll be saying the opposite once our girls flower into beautiful women.” said Daenerys.

“Maybe. But I’ll enjoy every second that they remain our little girls.” Daeron said fondly, reaching out his fingers and brushing them against the cheeks of his newborn daughter.

“She has your hair.” he said fondly, watching his daughter peacefully sleeping on the bedside.

“And my eyes.” said Daenerys, keeping their newborn daughter close to her body.

“I see. Have you settled on a name?” he asked, knowing that it was Dany decision to make as he had named their daughter the last time.

“Rhaella. Her name is Rhaella Targaryen.” said Daenerys.

“Your mother’s name. It’s a good name.” said Daeron, taking his wife’s hand into his own and pressing a chaste kiss on the back of her knuckles.

An excerpt from the Lineages of the Dragon by Dr Charles Spectre

Most members of House Targaryen sported the classic looks of a Valyrian noble. Gleaming pale skin, silver hair, and amethyst eyes were the most common traits passed down from their ancestors. Only a few exceptions were found among the members of House Targaryen that deviated from their common physical traits due to intermarrying with Andals and the First Men.

However, it was not until the Daeron the Third a strange phenomenon started to develop in the Targaryen bloodline. All males born after Daeron the Third in the Targaryen family inherited his skin complexion, physique and hair while retaining the eyes of Queen Daenerys and her ancestors. All daughters of House Targaryen took after Queen Daenerys in looks.

Many renowned maesters of the Citadel believed that it was a strange coincidence and nothing else. But this phenomenon was not something to be dismissed as a strange coincidence because magic was involved.

It was only thanks to King Baelon Targaryen's patronage that the University of Dragonstone was allowed to conduct a detailed study about the effects of prophecy and warging on bloodlines. There was not much information to compare, but our best studies have come to the conclusion that King Daeron's warging powers might've reinforced his identity so thoroughly in his blood that he passed it on to his male descendants. This conclusion was reached solely on the finding that all Targaryen males descended from Daeron the Third were born with the gift of warging, while a few became Greenseers as well. They had dragon and direwolf companions like King Daeron.

The Targaryen women born after Queen Daenerys took after her in appearance. Some among them were capable of warging, but most Targaryen women became gifted sorcerers capable of lighting the famed Glass Candles of Valyria.

Varys closed his eyes and let out a deep breath, enjoying the warmth of the sunlight as it shined upon him from the window of his chamber. Opening them, he looked upon a city that had changed dramatically and rapidly in the last decade. The tall obelisk that served as the war memorial for those who lost their lives during the Long Night towered over every structure in the capital. It now occupied Visenya's hill where the Great Sept of Baelor once stood. There was a smaller memorial stone nearby for all those who lost their lives on the burning of the sept as well. That particular memorial stone was fast becoming a shrine for those who followed the Faith of the Seven in the city in the absence of a grand sept in the capital.

Another change in the city was the sprouts of green and red he could see within the otherwise urban settlement. Unlike the monarchs of old, King Daeron insisted on leaving some pockets of land in the city to be planted with trees.

The Greencover project – his grace called it, Varys reminisced with a smile.

He had personally thought it was a useless venture with nothing to gain, but his grace often had the habit of proving him wrong, just like he did when he turned the Dragonpit into a museum of past Targaryen dragons. Both of those projects were costly, but they both served a purpose. People from all walks of life across the Seven Kingdoms and abroad came to the capital city to see the great dragons of Targaryen kings. They were willing to spend lots of silver for the opportunity to bask in their majesty. This, in turn, developed other local businesses in the city. The ports were flooding with visitors from Essos when his grace opened the Dragonpit for visitors.

The Greencover project, on the other hand, helped his grace to plant Weirwood trees within the city without anyone noticing. Later, this immensely helped when many Northerners and other Free Folk settled in the city. Already, these places were turned into places of worship. He was also privy to some information about his grace's efforts to bring the Children of the Forests to change these places into proper Godswoods with the faces of the Old Gods carved on the trees. King Daeron had also cleverly created a separate knightly order called the Knights of Godsgrooves. These knights were charged with the protection and maintenance of the Godswoods within the city and were responsible for the protection of the Dragonpit.

Of course, the city's renovation was not confined to planting trees and museums. The entire city's layout was being overhauled and in the days ahead he supposed King's Landing would be a gleaming city sprawled out over the three hills of the Conquerer and his sister wives. He did not doubt that Daeron Targaryen would take the city to new heights. With gold from Highgarden and Casterly Rock, there was no reason to suspect anything else.

Clasping hands behind his back, Varys turned away from the window and walked out of his room. His destination was the throne room, the one place that had seen not much renovation after his grace added a throne for Queen Daenerys.

A decade of peace he had allowed him to rest easy in his seat in the Small Council. When Daenerys Targaryen conceded the throne to her nephew a decade ago, he had feared for the worst. When he first set sights on Daeron Targaryen, he saw the shadow of the Rogue Prince, the venerable rider of Caraxes—but time had proved him wrong in his assessment.

After Daeron Targaryen put down the Ironborn rebellion and the Dornish civil war, there had been no major conflict in Westeros. It was not because the lords of Westeros were tired of waging wars against each other over petty squabbles. The reason there was a relative time of peace in the continent was because of House Targaryen. King Daeron had carved up the Reach on his whims and absorbed everything east of Bitterbridge into the Crownlands. The Stormlands as a kingdom ceased to exist, and House Targaryen unapologetically absorbed the land into the Crownlands. While there were some low grumblings in the Reach, the Stormlords observed eerie silence.

There were few Stormlords who survived the decade of war that followed Robert Baratheon's death. And those few were too old and weak to protest against the king's decision. The rest of the Stormlands nobility had perished in the many wars that ravaged the Seven Kingdoms. Most of the castles in the Stormlands were given away to the loyalists of House Targaryen. There were even wildling clans settling in the Stormlands, which became a

highly contentious issue in the court. But Varys had seen with his own eyes how easily those protests melted away when King Daeron marched out of the Red Keep and proceeded to make royal progress in the Stormlands. All the tongues wagging went silent when they saw dragons in the sky, and that was the end of the Stormlands as a cohesive polity within Westeros.

Once the whole kingdom went silent in fear of incurring the king's wrath, the Faith also observed silence as First Men communities started sprouting in the southern kingdoms.

The former kingdom of Stormlands was now a shell of its former self. It was now quickly turning into a bastion of First Men culture in the North. The most controversial decision so far had been giving away castles to Wildling clans. The castle of Storm's End was given to the chieftain of Thenn as a wedding gift. It was a scandal when the royal court learned Sansa Stark decided to take Sigorn of Thenn to be her husband.

The marriage between a Wildling clan chieftain and Sansa Stark was widely opposed in the court as many had tried desperately to earn the hand of the king's cousin. However, no one dared to make it an issue, as everyone feared the power of House Targaryen. One only needs to ask the Ironborn, the Lannisters and the Freys to see what happens to those who defy the House of the Dragon.

Varys had many misgivings about how Daeron Targaryen ruled but had to admit the king was a decisive ruler. Unlike what he feared, the brittleness of ruling through fear did not seem to have affected King Daeron's reign. He supposed the policy of looting the gold and resources from his defeated enemies and spending them on propping up King's Landing was a masterstroke. All the gold from Casterly Rock flooded into King's Landing, and the king aptly spent it reconstructing the entire capital ravaged by war and wildfire.

The treasury overflowed with gold within five years of King Daeron's reign. The people of King's Landing now no longer lived in a shit-filled city. Instead, the capital hosted some of the cleanest roads, wells, bathhouses, and sprawling buildings, all neatly arranged never to impede the flow of people, horses or carts within the city.

Even the Crownlands have improved considerably under more than a decade-long reign of House Targaryen. The restoration of the Royal Fleet was also a major decision that restored peace in the Narrow Sea. It was an ongoing work to purge the seas of pirates, primarily because of a weakened Pentos.

At first, it was the attack of Pentos by the mercenary company the Windblown. An agreement was struck between Queen Daenerys and the Windblown after she broke the siege of Meeren. That agreement stipulated the Iron Throne's help in taking Pentos. Thankfully, that was an agreement King Daeron didn't uphold.

Yet, that didn't stop the Windblown from enlisting the aid of a Dothraki Khalassar, which had split away from the Queen's army in Essos. The following war weakened Pentos by expending a great deal of fortune to defend themselves. But it was a profitable war for House Targaryen. King Daeron flew his dragon across the Narrow Sea and burned the

Dothraki Khalassar and the ambitious mercenary captain of the Windblown. Suffice it to say, the mercenary company and the Dothraki screamer were ashes in the wind.

Gold and Silver flowed into the coffers of Targaryen treasury from Pentos in return for the military aid.

Still, the brief war had cost Pentos dearly, and the instability of Volantis in the wake of the Queen's looting had once again turned Stepstones into an open battleground. The only piece of good news was that the Dornish had yet to step in and make it complicated. They were busy sharpening their spears to have another go at each other after King Daeron forced a tentative peace between the two warring factions.

'Of all the things my king could do, I never thought it'd be to split Dorne and even knock down the princely status of House Martell.' Varys thought amusedly.

It was a dangerous play to make, but so far, he had seen King Daeron making measured steps with Dorne. Almost everyone in Dorne could see what was happening to their once great kingdom, but Varys felt they had resigned themselves to wait out the ego clash between Lady Arianne Martell and Lord Gerold Dayne. Doran Martell had tried to bring peace to Dorne by trying to negotiate a marriage between his daughter and the Darkstar of High Hermitage.

But that fell apart when the man suddenly died one night in his sleep.

Whispers of foul play were there, but nothing could be proven. It didn't help half of Dorne believed Arianne killed her own father while the other half thought Gerold Dayne had a hand in it. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

He knew, for a matter of fact, the true killer of Doran Martell was the one who was about to inherit his position in the Small Council today.

Knowing that actually made him relieved. After all, when he was retiring from his post, he had a competent replacement more than capable of executing the duties the post demanded.

"You seem to be in a good mood today, Lord Varys."

Varys fought down the urge to jump in surprise. Instead, he tried his best to act normal as Arya Stark slid beside him in the throne room.

"I'm leaving the city behind and my responsibilities. It's a refreshing feeling." Varys said brightly.

"Oh, please. You hate yourself for doing this." Arya scoffed.

"Yes, I do. I wish I were a spry young man. Unfortunately, age is one enemy we must surrender to in the end."

"Your accommodations in Dragonstone are fabulous. I've seen to it. You'll not be in need of anything, and trust me, you'll be properly challenged in your new post." Arya promised.

“I believe you, Lady Stark.” Varys smiled at the subtle displeasure he could feel from the Stark woman on his form of address. “Or shall I address you as the Mistress of Whispers?”

He rarely got to get under the skin of the king’s cousin, but he made his wins count whenever he managed to rare as it might.

“Do whatever you like.” Arya shrugged her shoulders.

“How considerate of you.” Varys smiled thinly.

They suspended further conversation as more courtiers filled into the throne room. Many lords from far and wide were arriving for a tourney in the capital in honour of the king’s newborn child. The invitations had been sent long before the child had even been born, and now the realm knew the third child of King Daeron and Queen Daenerys was a daughter. But today’s court was not just about the proclamation of the birth of the young princess.

Only a handful of people were privy to the true reason for the court today.

“They seem to be happy together.” Arya observed.

Varys chased the line of sight of Lady Stark and found she was eyeing Ser Edwyn Manderly and his wife, Desmera Redwyne. It was one of the clever matches his grace brought about while stabilising the Reach. After all, having the daughter of Paxtor Redwyne married to the Castellan of Highgarden ensured peace within the Reach. House Redwyne was now busy championing Ser Edwyne to become the lord of Highgarden rather than supporting House Hightower.

Once again, his grace proved he was adept at playing the Game.

“They’ll have more reasons to be happier today.” said Varys.

The court suddenly became silent as the night when the king and queen arrived. Their steps echoed in the chamber, accompanied by the Kingsguard knights. However, there was a bundle of cloth in the king’s arms where a small babe was sleeping soundly. The young Princess Alyssa and Prince Aemon walked beside the Queen as they ascended the steps towards their thrones. The king took the Iron throne, while the queen took her silver throne. Prince Aemon stood beside his father near the Iron Throne, while Princess Alyssa stood near her mother’s throne.

“Welcome, lords and ladies of Westeros. The gods have blessed my family with a daughter of silver hair and amethyst eyes in the likeness of my queen. Her name shall be Rhaella Targaryen in memory of my wife’s mother and my own grandmother.”

The court erupted in cheers and toasts as the courtiers sang praises and heaped prayers for the sake of the newborn princess. What followed was a long ceremony of presenting gifts to the royals on the auspicious occasion. For nearly an hour, it continued until the royal couple decided to address the court once more.

“There are a couple more announcements my husband and I shall make today.”

The court fell silent to hear what the Queen had to say.

“Ser Edwyn Manderly. Come forth and kneel.” she ordered.

Varys marvelled at the queen's strength to exude such a commanding presence right after she came from the birthing bed. But this was a woman who survived many great tests of life and was forged anew by the tragedies that befell her family.

‘Adversity breeds strength, and strength brings greatness.’ Varys mused.

Ser Edwyn took a knee before the steps to the thrones.

“You knelt as the castellan of Highgarden. Your loyal service is appreciated by the crown and you’ve more than proven yourself capable. Rise, Ser. Rise and serve us as the Lord of Highgarden, a title you may pass on to your children and their children.”

Varys was not shocked, but he was a little surprised to see the man was not awarded the wardenship of the South. However, he doubted why that was done while closely eyeing Sansa Stark and her son.

He shook his head. It was not his place to judge or worry about such matters. He was an old man now. Besides, he trusted the King and Queen to make sound judgements. They had so far shown they were more than capable and worthy of their positions of power.

“Lord Maegyr, step forward and kneel.”

The brother of the deceased queen of Robb Stark knelt before the throne. The man had served ably in suppressing any rebellion in the Westerlands and kept the peace in the region for the throne.

“You are a trusted friend and the governor of Lannisport. Your help was invaluable in the subjugation of Volantis, which helped us secure enough Valyrian steel weapons to fight against the White Walkers on an even footing. Now rise, my lord. Rise as the Lord of Lannisport.”

The cheers died down when the king raised his hand and gestured to stop.

“We have another important announcement to make. From this day forth, we’ll stop calling ourselves the Seven Kingdoms. There are no seven kingdoms, as there are no seven kings. There is only one king and queen in Westeros, and they sit before you here in these thrones.”

“Therefore, I, Daeron of House Targaryen, declare the seven kingdoms are one and shall go by the name of Valinor henceforth. Let my daughter’s birth usher in a new age of prosperity and good fortune for the people of Valinor.”

“Hail the Queen!”

“Hail the King!”

“Hail Valinor!”

When the furore spread throughout the court, Varys relaxed.

'The realm is in safe hands. I should settle down and make something new in Dragonstone like Tyrion was doing in Meereen.' Varys mused.

****** The End ******