

“Archers! Loose!” Lord Glover shouted.

The sound of strings collectively releasing the arrows reached his ears against the backdrop of howling winds that carried sleet and teeth-chattering cold.

“Your grace! You should stand at the back of the army.” Ser Barristan shouted over the howling winds.

“I’m exactly where I should be, Ser Barristan.” said Daeron, unsheathing Lightbringer from its scabbard.

The blade was immediately consumed by red flames that burned eerily despite the snowstorm covering the battlefield. To his shock, the flames in the trenches became lit up again as if life returned to them.

“Get ready. The enemy is almost here.” Daeron warned, standing ready with both arms gripping the handle of Lightbringer.

The echolocation he was using spiked, picking up an object travelling at a fast pace straight for him.

‘A spear.’ Daeron thought.

The vision he was getting from the bat settled on his head was such that he knew the speed and trajectory of the speeding spear. The urge to duck and let the spear sail over his head was great, but Daeron took another approach. Placing the palm of his right hand against the flat side of Lightbringer, he positioned himself in the spear’s path. An ice spear crashed into the flat side of Lightbringer, pushing him a few paces back. His arms shook under the force that transitioned into his limbs from his sword, but he defended against the attack successfully.

“Archers! Loose!” Lord Glover could be heard shouting again.

A shower of arrows rained down on the enemy again. But that didn't stop a horde of undead from smashing into the last trench they had set up. One by one, they began falling into the last and the fourth trench line until a few of them managed to slowly climb out of it to continue their run, only to slam into the wall of pikes. However, the persistent snowing made it difficult for the caltrops to work against the undead army as they buried the dragonglass caltrops under the snow.

Daeron immediately raised Lightbringer in the air so everyone could see the flaming sword.

“Unsullied! Shield wall!” Grey Worm shouted.

Immediately, the Unsullied smoothly slid into the frontlines and built a shield wall with two rows of brave Unsullied warriors. He had restricted the Unsullied Army’s numbers in the war because he felt this was not their war to fight, and they deserved peace after enduring such a cruel life. Despite his wishes, Grey Worm had made it clear many among the Unsullied desired to fight by their side in the Long Night. Seeing these brave souls arrayed themselves against the undead without resolve in their eyes gave him courage and hope for a resounding victory.

“Let no man forget who we are. We are dragons! Fire and Blood!” Daeron shouted.

“Fire and Blood.”

“Fire and Blood.”

“Fire and Blood.”

The men started chanting steadily, gaining sound that even made the howling winds pale in comparison.

When the first wights started crashing into the shields of the Unsullied, the men began jabbing with their dragonglass-tipped spears. Wights started falling dead as their defence proved effective in combating the first wave. But corpses were piling up on the other side of the impeccable shield wall formed by the Unsullied. This allowed the wights to start climbing over the shield wall.

“Grey Worm. Two steps back.” Daeron ordered.

In an orderly fashion that’d shame even the most professional armies, the Unsullied executed a slow retreat that gave them more room, depriving the wights of the piling corpses to jump over the shield wall.

“Pass the message to Lord Glover and Lord Tarly. It’s time to fold inwards.” Daeron ordered Ser Eddic Mallister.

The knight immediately ran away to relay the message to the lords in command of their army’s formation. Methodically, their front line bulged inwards, ceding ground to the wights. Every step backwards was met with a relentless assault by the wights, and they fought off the attack fiercely without fail. Daeron had sheathed Lightbringer once he realised his flaming sword was actually causing more problems for his men. The flames lit up the wights he cut down in bright flames, which caused discomfort for the men around him. So, he had to switch to Dark Sister. He hacked and slashed at the frenzied wights, trying desperately to breach their defences.

Two loud horns were blown, and Daeron knew it was time for the next part of their plan to unfold. The front lines of their army had bulged inwards so much so that the wights came under the range of the Giants.

“Now! Come show your face, Night King.” Daeron muttered when the horns fell silent.

The Others atop their ice spiders tried to charge in to breach holes in their defences, but the Giants began throwing pots of Wildfire at the undead. Lord Glover didn’t wait a moment to give the order. The archers released their fiery arrows as did the Children sitting atop the shoulders of the Giants threw their exploding rocks. The Children’s weapons bombarded the wights, relieving the pressure the men felt on the frontlines. At the same time, the fiery arrows ignited the last caches of wildfire, burning away most of the wights in a single pyre. The massive graveyard of corpses of the wights was ample fuel to the fire as it spread even without Wildfire’s penchant to spread rapidly and consume everything in its path.

A roar of jubilation escaped the men, seeing pillars of flames consuming the Undead and the Others. The fire also burned away the corpses on their side that they left, ensuring they’d never get reanimated. Their plan had seamlessly worked, dealing heavy damage to the enemy. They had ceded ground steadily, inviting the bulk of the enemy in and destroying them in one sweep.

But Daeron immediately observed the flames getting weaker.

‘The Night King.’ he thought.

Sheathing Dark Sister, Daeron took out Lightbringer once again. Just like last time, the flames regained their flare and resisted the cold magic of the Night King. Instead of getting snuffed out, the flames burned brighter, throwing a wrench into the plans of the Night King to raise more of the dead or save his army from the fire.

“Come on. You’ve got no play left. Show yourself.” Daeron muttered, keeping his eyes on the Others and the Night King from the sky using owls and ravens.

When he picked up movement, Daeron ordered the soldiers to retreat slowly. The Others, led by the Night King, ran out of the fire with ferocious speed and strength, with their ice sword swinging in wide arcs. The Dragonglass weapons could not hold against the force of the Others’ swing, and they shattered on contact. Many men lost their lives as the ice swords cut through steel and bones like a hot knife through butter. The ice spiders were kept at bay by constantly pelting them with arrows. The siege towers with mounted ballistas came alive, picking off the ice spiders one by one. The Giants also pitched in with their massive bows, finding their aim true.

“Kingsguard! To me!” Daeron bellowed before charging towards the Others with Lightbringer at the ready.

In the background, Daeron could hear the horns being blown and the lords shouting for the men to retreat. The Others had to be met with Valyrian Steel weapons in battle, and for that to happen, they needed the army to withdraw so that the Kingsguard could battle the Others freely.

Daeron pushed a man out of the way and blocked an ice sword with Lightbringer. His arms shook under the force of the swing from the Other, but he was not dissuaded in the least. Instead of pushing against the strength of the icy creature, Daeron pushed Lightbringer to the side, quickly deflecting the ice sword and opening up the guard of the Other. He spun with Lightbringer in hand and cut a long gash through the creature’s midsection that shattered it into snowflakes.

“Remember not to make it a contest of strength. Speed is your ally in this battle.” Daeron shouted to his trusted knights and warriors carrying Valyrian Steel weapons in hand.

The battle began in earnest, and Daeron quickly found himself facing another White Walker. He swung wide, and the Other moved a step back, stepping out of the reach of Lightbringer. But the Other never saw the blade that came from its back as it had eyes only for Daeron. Ser Barristan’s sword pierced through the neck of the Other, shattering into pieces. The old knight’s movements were sharp and silent with near perfection, leaving no room for mistake. Another White Walker came at them with an ice spear. Ser Barristan dodged the White Walker’s attempt to stab with the spear, and Daeron mustered up his strength to smash the ice spear to the ground. Ser Barristan immediately stabbed the Other in its eye with a dragonglass dagger, killing it.

They didn’t get a respite as they were immediately engaged in a battle with two Others.

Daeron went on full offensive this time, slashing and hacking at the Other at his best speed. However, it became increasingly difficult to keep up his footwork as corpses littered the ground.

‘If I’m having difficulty, the White Walker also feels the same discomfort.’ Daeron thought.

Crouching low, he evaded a swing by the Other while stabbing the creature straight through its belly. The White Walker tried to move back, but corpses made it stumble, and Daeron was not one to waste such an opportunity. He surged forward and stabbed the creature through its throat, killing it instantly. Feeling movement on his back thanks to the echolocation from the bat, he left Lightbringer stabbed on the ground and unsheathed Dark Sister at the right time to defend himself from an ice sword. Spinning on the balls of his feet, he delivered a swift cut that cut through the creature’s forehead. The Other shattered like a mirror, and he got a small respite. While catching his breath, Daeron saw the glowing icy eyes of the Night King facing him.

“Finally.” Daeron huffed, spinning Dark Sister in his right hand while taking Lightbringer into his left hand from where he had stabbed it into the ground.

Just as he started moving towards the immobile Night King, an Other rushed at him from the side with an ice spear in its hand. Stabbing Dark Sister into the ground, Daeron bowed out of the slash by the ice spear, aiming for his neck. He had to deflect the spear each time as the Other tried to stab him while keeping him at a distance. Whenever he tried to close the gap, the creature expertly moved backwards, forcing Daeron to tire himself, trying desperately to close the gap. He felt movement coming from his side, but he kept his focus on the Other. A moment later, the creature regretted keeping its sole focus on fighting him as Arya slid underneath the Other’s guard and slashed through its legs with her sword. When it fell with a scream, Daeron didn’t hesitate to decapitate the creature with Lightbringer.

“That was a good one, Arya.” said Daeron.

“You can thank me later. Let’s kill that one and end this for good.” said Arya, taking a dragonglass dagger into her other hand.

“I couldn’t agree more.” said Daeron, setting his sights on the Night King, who had his sword stabbed into the ground and his arms raised.

“What’s that thing doing?” Arya asked.

“He is raising the dead. Mind the dead bodies on the ground.” Daeron warned, stabbing the few dead bodies around him with Lightbringer, setting them on fire.

Daeron huffed upon seeing many dead bodies rising behind the Night King to do his bidding. However, before those undead numbers could become a threat, Daenerys swooped in from the sky and torched them from atop Drogon. The black flames of Drogon swallowed the wights whole, reducing the newly resurrected undead army to almost nothing. There were a few wights in between, but those were quickly dispatched by Sigorn, Tormund and Val.

“Wait for an opportunity. If you see it, strike hard and fast.” Daeron muttered to Arya before he rushed towards the Night King with Lightbringer in hand.

Along the way, he dispatched a pair of wights that tried to block his way. Lightbringer carved them up and lit them on fire before he brought the sword down in a swift slash, aiming for the Night King’s shoulder. The Night King easily parried Daeron’s attack with his ice sword and went for a quick jab at his midsection. Daeron jumped back while parrying the attack, and from there onwards, he found himself on the back foot as the Night King notched up the attack. Each time the icy sword of the Night King connected with Lightbringer, Daeron felt the pain in his bones. The power of each swing of the Night King’s sword was too much to bear, and sooner or later, he would’ve no choice but to retreat.

Daeron grunted as he deflected another slash that was meant to cut off his neck. His ears suddenly picked up the flapping of wings, and not a moment later, Drogon swooped in and breathed his black fire on the ground, swallowing more wights and Others. The heat from the black flames vapourised the Others, and Daeron could feel its intensity on his skin. The Night King undoubtedly also felt the danger the black flames posed because he moved away from the flames and instantly made an ice spear in his right hand. When the Night King raised the spear in its hand, Daeron knew the creature was about to target Drogon.

Picking Dark Sister from where he had stabbed it on the ground, Daeron rushed towards the Night King with a yell. Abandoning his own advice, he forcedly swung Dark Sister at the Night King. He was easily pushed back by the creature while parrying a stab to his abdomen. He regretted giving the valyrian steel dagger to his wife as he felt wielding two swords was slowing him down against a foe like the Night King. At least his quick attack on the Night King distracted the creature from aiming its spear at Drogon. They continued to exchange blows, and Daeron was getting tired. Unfortunately, he could not find an opening to take advantage. Even now, he could only keep up with the Night King because of the echolocation, giving him an advantage in the fight.

Each movement the Night King made registered in his brain far early, thanks to echolocation. This gave him time to respond immediately and devise counters. But he could only pull it off for so long as his body was starting to tire of battle. Fortunately, there came a moment when the Night King became distracted by Drogon, landing right behind the creature with a thunderous roar that shook the earth. At that exact moment, the Night King became off balance, and Daeron managed to trap his ice spear between Dark Sister and Lightbringer. A twist of his wrist was all it took for the flaming sword to slash through the Night King's palm.

Daeron was more surprised than the Night King in seeing the palm and the ice spear fall on the ground. He blinked, and in the next moment, a dragonglass knife was sticking out of the shoulder of the Night King courtesy of Arya.

'It seems she took my advice to heart.' he thought.

Daeron was quick to act when the Night King raised his ice sword. Lightbringer cut through the creature's hand and severed it at the shoulder. Without wasting a breath, he promptly stabbed Lightbringer through the Night King's chest. The ice on the creature sizzled as Lightbringer's flames burned a brilliant white. The King of the Others melted into a puddle of water before his eyes, and all was quiet in the world.

With a deep breath, Daeron stabbed both swords into the ground and sat down with his eyes closed. His limbs felt like they were made of iron, rendering them useless, as if an unseen weight weighed them down. He looked east where the sun was supposed to be, but the darkness remained sans for the flames illuminating the battlefield. Thankfully, the storm died, and the Others died with them.

"We won!" Arya whispered hesitantly, looking around at the battlefield as if she was seeing everything for the first time.

Daeron snorted before he started chuckling uncontrollably. And that was how Danerys found him, sitting in the snow, laughing uncontrollably like a madman. Only when she enveloped him in a warm hug did he fall silent. The darkness and the chilling air remained, but Daeron never felt more safe or warm as he nuzzled against his wife's neck, feeling the steady thrum of her pulse against his ear.

Pyres had been burning for days without end, and Daeron had almost forgotten how many funerals he had attended. At this point, it must be hundreds. The cost of war, while mitigated by their crafty use of all available resources, was still high. Right now, he was seeing to the body of Harrion Karstark's remains being prepared to be transported to Karhold. The death of Lord Harrion would make things complicated for Karhold as many would try to take Alys Karstark as their wife for the

chance of becoming Lord of Karhold. Similarly, many succession issues would be rearing up in the North, the Vale, the Riverlands and the Reach. The death of many prominent lords like Lord Yohn Royce and Horton Redfort was going to be a blow to his healthy relationship with the Vale. The rapport he had cultivated with the two of the most influential lords in the Vale had now gone down the drain. Their cooperation should have been instrumental in Harrold Arryn's ascension as the Eyrie's lord. He'd have to cultivate a better relationship with their heirs in their absence.

Similarly, the loss of knights and lords of the Crownlands was also an issue. Many castles and lands were now left open for new blood. He'd only get the full picture after a thorough accounting of the claims.

"So, the war is won. What do you plan to do now?" Daeron asked, clapping Tormund on his shoulder.

"You ask difficult questions." Tormund grunted.

"You and your people are free to do as you wish. But I'd advise you to settle in these lands. The Gift is yours if you'll have it. Your people could farm here, build houses, and raise their children in peace." said Daeron.

"You know us, Free Folk. We like to roam as far and wide as possible." Tormund said.

"Then roam as much as you like. But no more walls. Our people united to fight the great enemy, and we won the war. Now, let's stay united to prosper in peace." said Daeron, holding out his hand towards Tormund.

"You don't have to convince me. I decided a long ago to follow yeh." said Tormund, shaking Daeron's hand.

Daeron made sure to collect all the names he could of those who lost their lives in the War for Dawn. While their corpses burned to ashes, he vowed their sacrifices would not be forgotten. He had many plans in his mind for the Seven Kingdoms, but none of them would see the light of day if he could not end the defiance of the Lannisters and the Ironborn rebellion. Therefore, the first thing he enquired upon his return to Winterfell was the status of the siege of the Rock and the Ironborn rebellion.

The only piece of good news was that Lannisport had surrendered, avoiding a bloody siege. This left Casterly Rock as the sole remaining holdout of House Lannister. The westermen had seen the futility in resisting the army under Ser Edwyn Manderly because they knew what was to come should they show further defiance. Therefore, the Lannisters were hiding inside their castle with nowhere to go.

Daeron was quite content to leave the Lannisters be for the time being. Staring at the map sprawled out before him, he placed the dragon figure near Pyke.

"Hmm. It seems you've decided where we should strike." Daenerys breathed into his ear sultrily, pressing a kiss against his neck while her hands wandered his naked torso.

He allowed her to do as he pleased, and soon enough, his wife slipped into his lap with an apple in her hand. Daenerys took a bit of the apple and offered it to him.

"I'm closing the chapter of the Ironborn forever. Westeros does not need the Ironborn and their culture. We've tolerated these pirates for long enough." said Daeron, taking a small bite of the apple in his wife's hand.

"Hmm. How exactly are you going to accomplish such a tall task?" Daenerys asked silkily, her eyes taking on a teasing look.

Daeron had to exercise a lot of control as his wife intentionally let the silk sheet covering her body slip down her shoulders all the way to her belly. To make matters worse, his wife had the audacity to let her flowing silver hair free from all the bindings, knowing her hair stirred him in many ways.

“That is a thought for tomorrow. Today, I think I’ll take you somewhere more intimate.” Daeron whispered, capturing her lips in a steamy kiss.

“Hmm. What has my husband planned for us, I wonder?” Daenerys breathed.

“How’d you like to make love in a hot spring?” Daeron asked, his eyes dark with lust.

An excerpt from The Second Long Night by Samwell Tarly

The victory over the Others was something King Daeron Targaryen was assured of because the preparations were seamless. He had said it often: half the war is logistics, and the rest is strategy and luck.

When the war ended, King Daeron’s predictions became true. The Night King and his army of wights lay dead on the field. But so did a portion of King Daeron’s army. King Daeron lost eleven thousand men in the war out of an army of nearly fifty thousand active soldiers while another ten thousand were held in reserve. But most of those deaths were not purely inflicted by the Others. The death toll became so high because of what transpired after King Daeron slew the Night King with Lightbringer.

The Long Night was not a fancy name used by our ancestors. As it turns out, the title was aptly put because Westeros was subjected to three long days of darkness. From the Wall to the shores of Dorne, there was hardly any light. Even though the Night King was slain by King Daeron, their powerful dark magic blanketed Westeros like a dark veil. Those who fell ill or injured on the battlefield found no respite. The lucky few managed to survive their injuries, but they became crippled or weak as days went by.

The most prominent example of this dark tale was Ser Barristan Selmy of the Kingsguard. The old knight showed great valour by guarding the flanks of King Daeron. He alone slew five Others on the battlefield, but he fell injured when a wight stabbed his knee. The darkness that lingered after the fall of the Night King exacerbated the injury suffered by Barristan the Bold, leaving him a cripple despite the best care the maesters could give. Similarly, the wounds sustained by the courageous men in King Daeron’s army became fatal, leaving many to die or permanently cripple them.

When the Long Night finally ended, the morning was restored on the fourth day all across Westeros. Sun shined brightly on the Seven Kingdoms, but Westeros had not seen the last of war. Despite the valiant men of the Seven Kingdoms overcoming the monsters of the dark, they had to contend with the monsters that lived among them.

In the Westerlands, the Lannisters remained defiant in Casterly Rock. The Ironborn were led by a madman intent on waging a losing war. In Dorne, House Dayne and House Martell were bitterly fighting each other over who gets to rule a desert. Looking at the state of the Seven Kingdoms, I could only despair at the loss of life and suffering that was to follow.

As my dear friend King Daeron once said,

“Peace is a consequence of war. Without war, we wouldn’t know the value of peace.”

That was an unfortunate reality of the world and had remained true throughout the ages.

An excerpt from The Fall of a People by Grandmaester Marwyn

The Ironborn were a queer folk. Their origin was always disputed. Some believe they were the first to inhabit the lands of Westeros. Others think they were First Men that later developed into a separate culture in isolation.

Whatever the case, the Ironborn had more in common with the Dothraki horse lords that roamed the great grass sea of Essos. While House Targaryen had primarily managed to suppress the tendency of the Ironborn to reave the shores of Westeros, the ascension of a man like Balon Greyjoy changed the fate of the Iron Islands. Not only did he launch a failed rebellion, he gave rise to an even more monstrous leader.

Euron Greyjoy was a madman who was dangerous to the Ironborn themselves. His selection in the Kingsmoot was followed by a year-long war against the Reach. The bloodletting that followed in the Shield Islands was unseen in the Reach’s history. Even during the time of Dagon Greyjoy, the Reach never suffered such depravities. The political slugfest that transpired in the King’s Landing between Cersei Lannister and Margaery Tyrell saw a weak response from Highgarden against the Ironborn attack. In Lord Mace Tyrell’s absence, Highgarden was ruled by Willas Tyrell, and the young Lord proved how ineffective his rule was when the Ironborn began raiding the shores of the Reach.

The failure of House Tyrell became the crowning moment for House Hightower. Oldtown came to the defence of the Shield Islands under the stalwart leadership of Ser Baelor Hightower. Paxtor Redwyne supported Ser Baelor with his fleet and managed to drive the reavers serving Euron Greyjoy. The decisive battles that shattered the strength of the Iron Fleet were fought near the waters of Greenshield and Fair Isle.

As the Redwyne Fleet and Hightower Fleet pushed the Ironborn to their islands, the number of enemies of Euron Greyjoy among the Ironborn fell in numbers. Euron’s reign was not popular in the Iron Islands as he was known for hunting down the priests of the Drowned God, and he knew this early on. To mitigate any threats among his men to his authority, Euron awarded his detractors with lands in the recently conquered Shield Islands. It took the Ironborn time to realise Euron’s gifts were laced with poison. Their rewards became their undoing as the Ironborn found themselves trapped in the Shield Islands while the Iron Fleet withdrew to safer waters. In the end, those Ironborn left behind tasted the cold steel of sturdy Reachmen under the command of Ser Baelor Hightower.

After the major battle for the Shield Islands, the next major battle against the Ironborn was fought near the waters of Fair Isle. Once again, the Redwyne fleet showed its dominance of the sea by crushing the ten ships of Harlaw and twenty of Orkwood. The battle of Fair Isle was a decisive battle for two reasons. It shattered the Iron Fleet’s capability to project its power outside their home islands and ensured the capitulation of Lannisport to Ser Edwyn Manderly.

When word of the Redwyne fleet’s victory spread in the Westerlands, the garrison of Lannisport saw where the winds were blowing. They knew their city would be the next target, and the men didn’t want their shores to burn again. They also saw the futility of resisting House Targaryen any longer and surrendered to Ser Edwyn Manderly. There was also sheer pragmatism involved as the city was placed under siege. The victory of the Redwyne fleet over the Ironborn made it clear that their

access to the sea would be lost soon. With Lannisport being the third most populous city in Westeros, they were already facing a dire shortage of food and other resources because of the siege from the land. Houses Lannett, Lantell and Lannys overthrew the Lannisters of Lannisport and surrendered the city to Ser Edwyn Manderly, ending the months-long siege of the city.

The benefit of Lannisport's fall was reaped not just by the loyal forces of the Iron Throne but also by House Redwyne and Hightower. They now had access to Lannisport, which had sufficient space to anchor their ships. The intact ships of House Lannister were few, but they also joined the effort to invade the Iron Islands. However, there was still the impending invasion of the Iron Islands and the capture of Casterly Rock. It was against this backdrop of invasion and siege King Daeron arrived at Lannisport atop his mighty dragon Rhaegal after winning the war for Dawn.

What came after the king's arrival was nothing short of extraordinary. The impenetrable seat of House Lannister fell in one night, and the dragon king turned his sights on the Iron Islands the very next day. He called all the fleets available to him, and they all answered his call. It had been a longstanding demand of the lords of the Seven Kingdoms to Aegon the Conqueror to decimate the Ironborn. The first Targaryen king ignored such requests, but three centuries after Aegon's reign, a Targaryen king listened.

Euron Greyjoy never knew that he had sealed the fate of the Ironborn by waging a disastrous war on the rest of Westeros. Once King Daeron set his eyes on the Iron Islands, everyone knew the Ironborn were finished for good. The dragon king had defeated death and ice itself. From the Wall to Dorne, all creatures called him king, and those who didn't soon learned the heat of dragon flames.

With everything at his disposal, King Daeron flew atop his dragon while ships ferried in men into the islands the Ironborn inhabited. From that day onwards the people of the Iron Islands knew nothing but Fire and Blood.