

Tourney Grounds

King's Landing

His lip was bleeding. No... Was it the gums? His tongue ran along the back of his teeth, the metallic taste painting along his mouth with the motion, till he pressed the tip against the base of the offending weeping tooth. Unclenching his jaw, the corner of his mouth turning down at the numbness, he heard his sister in his mind - telling him he was going to break his teeth with his gnashing. His eyes flicked to the side, glaring towards the boy standing next to him - the spotted thing clearly too young to be there. Then again - his eyes moved to the rest - so many of them were.

Keeping his body still, he jerked his chin slightly to the side. The child, who had been staring at the scar with morbid fascination, nearly stumbled as he rushed over with the cup. Holding it at his mouth, Leyton drank deeply, the sweet wine cleaning his palette, before spitting out into the cup, the formerly pale liquid now pink.

Suddenly buffeted to the side, the man putting on his armour struggling, Leyton cursed at the incompetence. He then closed his eyes to ignore the shaking hands. "When?" He spoke out through gritted teeth, quickly assured that it would be but a moment more. When the moment had passed, Leyton got up. The man insisted he was not done. Leyton did not care. Walking out of the tent, his small entourage flitting about him like pigeons around a stale roll, he marched towards the field. They quickly fell behind.

The quiet did nothing for his dark tone. When the crowd rose for his challenger, he struggled to retain his seeming detachment. His hands... Hand - however, clenched. Sometimes he still felt it. Itching. Sweating. Shaking as if exerted. The cool gold around his finger.

He needed to focus... Despite his challenge.

A kid. They put him up against a kid?

He knelt after his short stride, knee digging into the mud. Towards... Lyonel, the movement unthinking.

He felt blood in his mouth again.

"Ser Leyton of House Tyrell, Lord Paramount of the Reach." The words were a taunt, despite what they represented. He needed to be done with this.

The horse had been secured for him. He cared not for it, nor the prattle that filled his ears as to its rearing. He did not even know whether the beast had a name. Comfortable in the saddle, his knees clenched, guiding it with practiced ease. Leaning to the left somewhat, trying to off-set the unbalanced weight, he took a breath. And then another.

His heart was still. With as close to reluctance as he would be allowed, he moved into position- before he took another breath.

The boy was hardly an enemy. His eyes still held the joy of the young. The joy he would have seen in his own son - and been so easily fond of. He hoped he had family in the crowd. To pat him on the shoulder, and praise his eagerness. He hoped a favoured maiden would be there, to soften the blow of a loss on his first real joust.

He could not deny his smirk, allowing it behind his visor. What a foolish thought. The boy probably was still a virgin, seeing as how eager he was in all this. No experiences to dull his keen bravado. Perhaps he should send him a consolation prize - his sister had maids plenty - and Highgarden was not known as a pleasure palace for no reason.

And he was off. Faster than on the battlefield. No consideration for terrain. He had done this hundreds of times. The impact was never so... soft.

At least, never so - off the battlefield.

He was brought back to reality with a shout, the blood pooling across the splintered wood. The boy fell, and Leyton was off his saddle the moment after -rushing to him.

He needed...

He placed a covered hand across the neck, looking up, seeing men rushing towards them. He looked down, seeing the Stranger take him.

All hopes faded.

All promises, broken.

All names, struck.

As the screams filled the area, still on his knees beside the corpse, Leyton stared as the limp form was fussed over. His arm hung at his side, dripping off the quickly cooling blood. His other hand, twitched... whispering in its absence of his futile efforts, made less so - had it been present. He slowly got up. And started to walk through the wide berth afforded to him by the crowd.

He had killed the boy.