

TYRION



IT WOULD
APPEAR RENLY WAS
MURDERED MOST
FEARFULLY IN THE
VERY MIDST OF
HIS ARMY.



HIS THROAT
WAS OPENED FROM
EAR TO EAR BY A BLADE
THAT PASSED THROUGH
STEEL AND BONE AS IF
THEY WERE SOFT
CHEESE.



MURDERED
BY WHOSE
HAND?

HAVE YOU EVER
CONSIDERED THAT
TOO MANY ANSWERS ARE
THE SAME AS NO ANSWER AT
ALL? MY INFORMERS ARE NOT
ALWAYS AS HIGHLY PLACED AS
WE MIGHT LIKE. WHEN A KING
DIES, FANCIES SPROUT
LIKE MUSHROOMS IN
THE DARK.

A GROOM
SAYS THAT RENLY WAS
SLAIN BY A KNIGHT OF
HIS OWN RAINBOW GUARD.
A WASHERWOMAN CLAIMS
STANNIS STOLE THROUGH THE
HEART OF HIS BROTHER'S
ARMY WITH HIS MAGIC
SWORD.



SEVERAL
MEN-AT-ARMS BELIEVE A
WOMAN DID THE FELL DEED,
BUT CANNOT AGREE ON WHICH
WOMAN. A MAID THAT RENLY HAD
SPURNED, CLAIMS ONE. A CAMP
FOLLOWER BROUGHT IN TO SERVE
HIS PLEASURE ON THE EVE OF
BATTLE, SAYS A SECOND. THE
THIRD VENTURES THAT IT MIGHT
HAVE BEEN THE LADY
CATELYN STARK.



MUST YOU WASTE OUR TIME WITH EVERY RUMOR THE FOOLS CARE TO TELL?

YOU PAY ME WELL FOR THESE RUMORS, MY GRACIOUS QUEEN.

WE PAY YOU FOR THE TRUTH, LORD VARYS. REMEMBER THAT, OR THIS SMALL COUNCIL MAY GROW SMALLER STILL.



JOFF WILL BE SO DISAPPOINTED. HE WAS SAVING SUCH A NICE SPIKE FOR RENLY'S HEAD. BUT WHOEVER DID THE DEED, WE MUST ASSUME STANNIS WAS BEHIND IT. THE GAIN IS CLEARLY HIS.

TYRION DID NOT LIKE THIS NEWS; HE HAD COUNTED ON THE BROTHERS BARATHEON DECIMATING EACH OTHER IN BLOODY BATTLE.

WHAT OF RENLY'S HOST?



THE GREATER PART OF HIS FOOT REMAINS AT BITTERBRIDGE. MOST OF THE LORDS WHO RODE WITH LORD RENLY TO STORM'S END HAVE GONE OVER STANNIS, WITH ALL THEIR CHIVALRY.

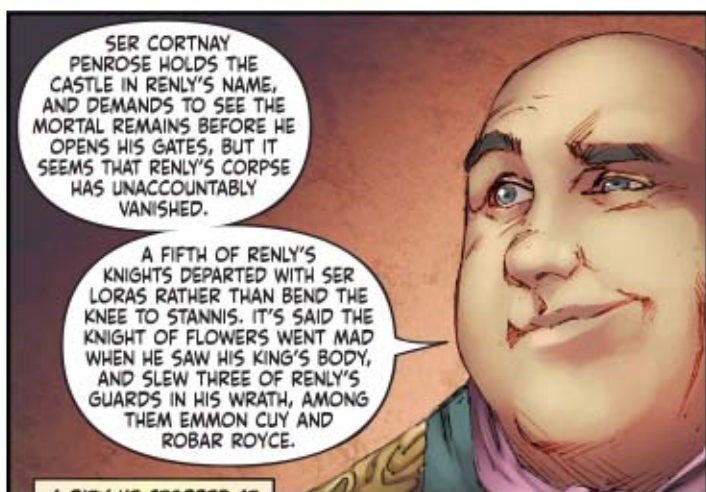
LED BY THE FLORENTS, I'D WAGER.

YOU WOULD WIN, MY LORD. LORD ALESTER WAS INDEED THE FIRST TO BEND THE KNEE. MANY OTHERS FOLLOWED.



MANY, BUT NOT ALL?

NOT ALL. NOT LORAS TYRELL, NOR RANDYLL TARTY, NOR MATHIS ROWAN. AND STORM'S END ITSELF HAS NOT YIELDED.



SER CORTNAY PENROSE HOLDS THE CASTLE IN RENLY'S NAME, AND DEMANDS TO SEE THE MORTAL REMAINS BEFORE HE OPENS HIS GATES, BUT IT SEEMS THAT RENLY'S CORPSE HAS UNACCOUNTABLY VANISHED.

A FIFTH OF RENLY'S KNIGHTS DEPARTED WITH SER LORAS RATHER THAN BEND THE KNEE TO STANNIS. IT'S SAID THE KNIGHT OF FLOWERS WENT MAD WHEN HE SAW HIS KING'S BODY, AND SLEW THREE OF RENLY'S GUARDS IN HIS WRATH, AMONG THEM EMMON CUY AND ROBAR ROYCE.

A PITY HE STOPPED AT THREE, THOUGHT TYRION.



SER LORAS IS LIKELY MAKING FOR BITTERBRIDGE. HIS SISTER IS THERE, RENLY'S QUEEN, AS WELL AS A GREAT MANY SOLDIERS WHO SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES KINGLESS. WHICH SIDE WILL THEY TAKE NOW?

A TICKLISH QUESTION. MANY SERVE THE LORDS WHO REMAINED AT STORM'S END, AND THOSE LORDS NOW BELONG TO STANNIS.



THERE IS A CHANCE HERE, IT SEEMS TO ME. WIN LORAS TYRELL TO OUR CAUSE AND LORD MACE TYRELL AND HIS BANNERMEN MIGHT JOIN US AS WELL.

THEY MAY HAVE SWORN THEIR SWORDS TO STANNIS FOR THE MOMENT, YET THEY CANNOT LOVE THE MAN, OR THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN HIS FROM THE START.



IS THEIR LOVE FOR US ANY GREATER?

SCARCELY. THEY LOVED RENLY, CLEARLY, BUT RENLY IS SLAIN. PERHAPS WE CAN GIVE THEM GOOD AND SUFFICIENT REASONS TO PREFER JOFFREY TO STANNIS...IF WE MOVE QUICKLY.

WHAT SORT OF REASONS DO YOU MEAN TO GIVE THEM?



GOLD REASONS.

SWEET PETYR, SURELY YOU DO NOT MEAN TO SUGGEST THAT THESE PUISSANT LORDS AND NOBLE KNIGHTS COULD BE *BOUGHT* LIKE SO MANY CHICKENS IN THE MARKET?

HAVE YOU BEEN TO OUR MARKETS OF LATE, LORD VARYS? YOU'D FIND IT EASIER TO BUY A LORD THAN A CHICKEN, I DARE SAY.



BRIBES MIGHT SWAY SOME OF THE LESSER LORDS, BUT NEVER HIGHGARDEN.

IT SEEMS TO ME WE SHOULD TAKE A LESSON FROM THE LATE LORD RENLY. WE CAN WIN THE TYRELL ALLIANCE AS HE DID. WITH A MARRIAGE.



YOU THINK TO WED KING JOFFREY TO MARGAERY TYRELL.

I DO.

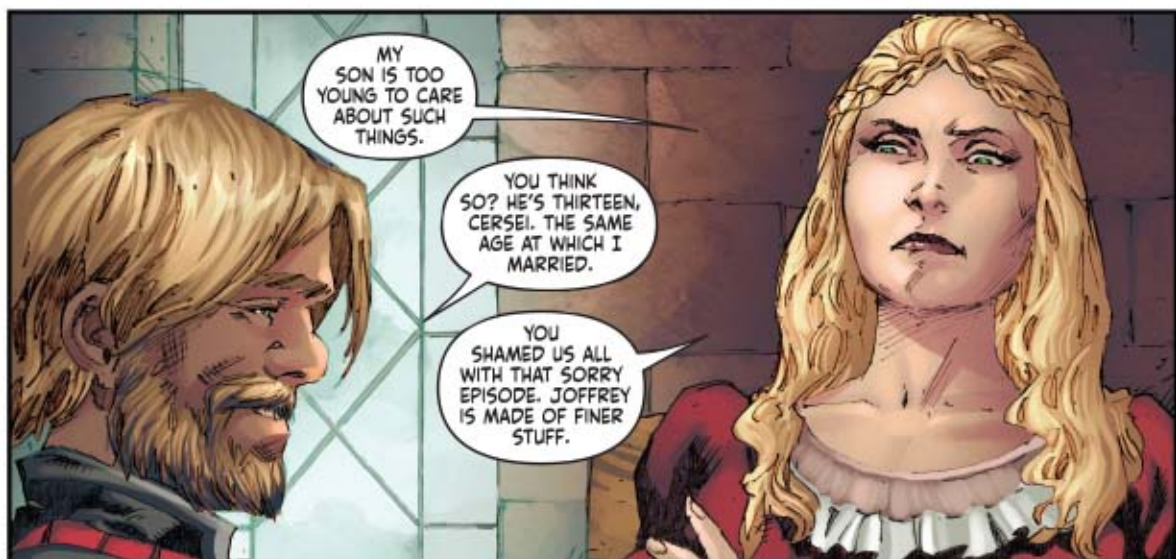
JOFFREY IS BETROTHED TO SANSA STARK.

MARRIAGE CONTRACTS CAN BE BROKEN. WHAT ADVANTAGE IS THERE IN WEDDING THE KING TO THE DAUGHTER OF A DEAD TRAITOR?



YOU MIGHT POINT OUT TO HIS GRACE THAT THE TYRELLS ARE MUCH WEALTHIER THAN THE STARKS, AND THAT MARGAERY IS SAID TO BE LOVELY...AND BEDDABLE BESIDES.

YES, JOFF OUGHT TO LIKE THAT WELL ENOUGH.



MY SON IS TOO YOUNG TO CARE ABOUT SUCH THINGS.

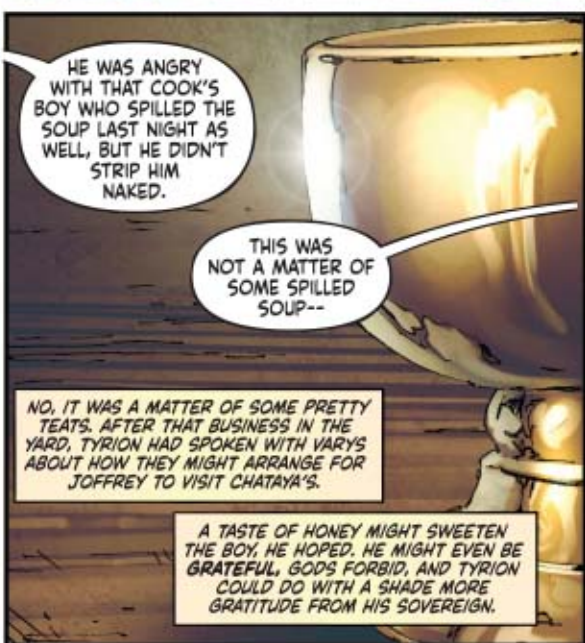
YOU THINK SO? HE'S THIRTEEN, CERSEI. THE SAME AGE AT WHICH I MARRIED.

YOU SHAMED US ALL WITH THAT SORRY EPISODE. JOFFREY IS MADE OF FINER STUFF.



SO FINE THAT HE HAD SER BOROS RIP OFF SANSA'S GOWN.

HE WAS ANGRY WITH THE GIRL.



HE WAS ANGRY WITH THAT COOK'S BOY WHO SPILLED THE SOUP LAST NIGHT AS WELL, BUT HE DIDN'T STRIP HIM NAKED.

THIS WAS NOT A MATTER OF SOME SPILLED SOUP--

NO, IT WAS A MATTER OF SOME PRETTY TEATS. AFTER THAT BUSINESS IN THE YARD, TYRION HAD SPOKEN WITH VARYS ABOUT HOW THEY MIGHT ARRANGE FOR JOFFREY TO VISIT CHATAYA'S.

A TASTE OF HONEY MIGHT SWEETEN THE BOY, HE HOPED. HE MIGHT EVEN BE GRATEFUL, GODS FORBID, AND TYRION COULD DO WITH A SHADE MORE GRATITUDE FROM HIS SOVEREIGN.



DOUBTLESS YOU KNOW YOUR SON BETTER THAN I DO, BUT REGARDLESS, THERE'S STILL MUCH TO BE SAID FOR A TYRELL MARRIAGE. IT MAY BE THE ONLY WAY THAT JOFFREY LIVES LONG ENOUGH TO REACH HIS WEDDING NIGHT.

THE STARK GIRL BRINGS JOFFREY NOTHING BUT HER BODY, SWEET AS THAT MAY BE.



MARGAERY TYRELL BRINGS FIFTY THOUSAND SWORDS AND ALL THE STRENGTH OF HIGHGARDEN.

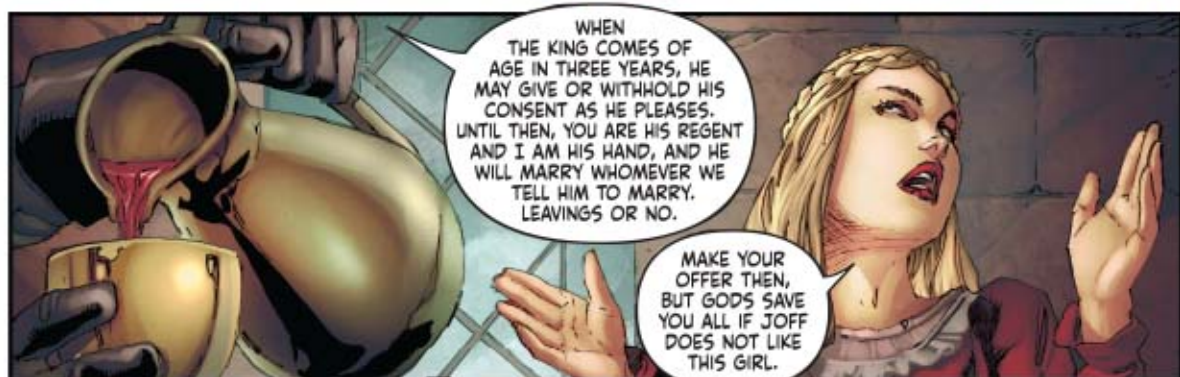


INDEED.
YOU HAVE A MOTHER'S
HEART, AND I KNOW HIS
GRACE LOVES HIS LITTLE
SWEETLING. YET KINGS MUST
LEARN TO PUT THE NEEDS OF
THE REALM BEFORE THEIR
OWN DESIRES. I SAY
THIS OFFER MUST
BE MADE.



YOU
WOULD NOT SPEAK
SO IF YOU WERE
WOMEN!

SAY WHAT YOU
WILL, MY LORDS,
BUT JOFFREY IS TOO
PROUD TO SETTLE FOR
RENLY'S LEAVINGS.
HE WILL NEVER
CONSENT.



WHEN
THE KING COMES OF
AGE IN THREE YEARS, HE
MAY GIVE OR WITHHOLD HIS
CONSENT AS HE PLEASES.
UNTIL THEN, YOU ARE HIS REGENT
AND I AM HIS HAND, AND HE
WILL MARRY WHOMEVER WE
TELL HIM TO MARRY.
LEAVINGS OR NO.

MAKE YOUR
OFFER THEN,
BUT GODS SAVE
YOU ALL IF JOFF
DOES NOT LIKE
THIS GIRL.



I'M SO PLEASED
WE CAN AGREE. NOW,
WHICH OF US SHALL GO
TO BITTERBRIDGE? WE
MUST REACH SER LORAS
WITH OUR OFFER
BEFORE HIS BLOOD
CAN COOL.

YOU MEAN
TO SEND
ONE OF THE
COUNCIL?

I CAN
SCARCELY EXPECT
THE KNIGHT OF FLOWERS
TO TREAT WITH BRONN
OR SHAGGA, CAN I?
THE TYRELLS ARE
PROUD.



YOUR
GRACE, MY
LORD HAND,
LET ME
GO.

YOU?

WHAT GAIN DOES HE
SEE IN THIS? TYRION
WONDERED.