

diamonds over the earth. The mountain men fell in behind him, each clan arrayed behind its own leaders.

In the dawn light, the army of Lord Tywin Lannister unfolded like an iron rose, thorns gleaming.

His uncle would lead the center. Ser Kevan had raised his standards above the kingsroad. Quivers hanging from their belts, the foot archers arrayed themselves into three long lines, to east and west of the road, and stood calmly stringing their bows. Between them, pikemen formed squares; behind were rank on rank of men-at-arms with spear and sword and axe. Three hundred heavy horse surrounded Ser Kevan and the lords bannermen Lefford, Lydden, and Serrett with all their sworn retainers.

The right wing was all cavalry, some four thousand men, heavy with the weight of their armor. More than three quarters of the knights were there, massed together like a great steel fist. Ser Addam Marbrand had the command. Tyrion saw his banner unfurl as his standardbearer shook it out; a burning tree, orange and smoke. Behind him flew Ser Flement's purple unicorn, the brindled boar of Crakehall, the bantam rooster of Swyft, and more.

His lord father took his place on the hill where he had slept. Around him, the reserve assembled; a huge force, half mounted and half foot, five thousand strong. Lord Tywin almost always chose to command the reserve; he would take the high ground and watch the battle unfold below him, committing his forces when and where they were needed most.

Even from afar, his lord father was resplendent. Tywin Lannister's battle armor put his son Jaime's gilded suit to shame. His greatcloak was sewn from countless layers of cloth-of-gold, so heavy that it barely stirred even when he charged, so large that its drape covered most of his stallion's hindquarters when he took the saddle. No ordinary clasp would suffice for such a weight, so the greatcloak was held in place by a matched pair of miniature lionesses crouching on his shoulders, as if poised to spring. Their mate, a male with a magnificent mane, reclined atop Lord Tywin's greathelm, one paw raking the air as he roared. All three lions were wrought in gold, with ruby eyes. His armor was heavy steel plate, enameled in a dark crimson, greaves and gauntlets inlaid with ornate gold scrollwork. His rondels were golden sunbursts, all his fastenings were gilded, and the red steel was burnished to such a high sheen that it shone like fire in the light of the rising sun.

Tyrion could hear the rumble of the foemen's drums now. He remembered Robb Stark as he had last seen him, in his father's high seat in the Great Hall of Winterfell, a sword naked and shining in his hands. He remembered how the direwolves had come at him out of the shadows, and suddenly he could see them again, snarling and snapping, teeth bared in his face. Would the boy bring his wolves to war with him? The thought made him uneasy.

The northerners would be exhausted after their long sleepless march. Tyrion wondered what the boy had been thinking. Did he think to take them unawares while they slept? Small chance of that; whatever else might be said of him, Tywin Lannister was no man's fool.