

“The boy may hang back or lose his courage when he sees our numbers,” Lord Tywin replied.
“The sooner the Starks are broken, the sooner I shall be free to deal with Stannis Baratheon. Tell the drummers to beat assembly, and send word to Jaime that I am marching against Robb Stark.”

“As you will,” Ser Kevan said.

Tyrion watched with a grim fascination as his lord father turned next to the half-wild clansmen.
“It is said that the men of the mountain clans are warriors without fear.”

“It is said truly,” Conn of the Stone Crows answered.

“And the women,” Chella added.

“Ride with me against my enemies, and you shall have all my son promised you, and more,” Lord Tywin told them.

“Would you pay us with our own coin?” Ulf son of Umar said. “Why should we need the father’s promise, when we have the son’s?”

“I said nothing of need,” Lord Tywin replied. “My words were courtesy, nothing more. You need not join us. The men of the winterlands are made of iron and ice, and even my boldest knights fear to face them.”

Oh, deftly done, Tyrion thought, smiling crookedly.

“The Burned Men fear nothing. Timett son of Timett will ride with the lions.”

“Wherever the Burned Men go, the Stone Crows have been there first,” Conn declared hotly.
“We ride as well.”

“Shagga son of Dolf will chop off their manhoods and feed them to the crows.”

“We will ride with you, lion lord,” Chella daughter of Cheyk agreed, “but only if your halfman son goes with us. He has bought his breath with promises. Until we hold the steel he has pledged us, his life is ours.”

Lord Tywin turned his gold-flecked eyes on his son.

“Joy,” Tyrion said with a resigned smile.