

Ignoring them all, Catelyn turned all her force on her sister. "I remind you, Tyrion Lannister is my prisoner."

"And I remind you, the dwarf murdered my lord husband!" Her voice rose. "He poisoned the Hand of the King and left my sweet baby fatherless, and now I mean to see him pay!" Whirling, her skirts swinging around her, Lysa stalked across the terrace. Ser Lyn and Ser Morton and the other suitors excused themselves with cool nods and trailed after her.

"Do you think he did?" Ser Rodrik asked her quietly when they were alone again. "Murder Lord Jon, that is? The Imp still denies it, and most fiercely..."

"I believe the Lannisters murdered Lord Arryn," Catelyn replied, "but whether it was Tyrion, or Ser Jaime, or the queen, or all of them together, I could not begin to say." Lysa had named Cersei in the letter she had sent to Winterfell, but now she seemed certain that Tyrion was the killer... perhaps because the dwarf was here, while the queen was safe behind the walls of the Red Keep, hundreds of leagues to the south. Catelyn almost wished she had burned her sister's letter before reading it.

Ser Rodrik tugged at his whiskers. "Poison, well... that could be the dwarf's work, true enough. Or Cersei's. It's said poison is a woman's weapon, begging your pardons, my lady. The Kingslayer, now I have no great liking for the man, but he's not the sort. Too fond of the sight of blood on that golden sword of his. Was it poison, my lady?"

Catelyn frowned, vaguely uneasy. "How else could they make it look a natural death?" Behind her, Lord Robert shrieked with delight as one of the puppet knights sliced the other in half, spilling a flood of red sawdust onto the terrace. She glanced at her nephew and sighed. "The boy is utterly without discipline. He will never be strong enough to rule unless he is taken away from his mother for a time."

"His lord father agreed with you," said a voice at her elbow. She turned to behold Maester Colemon, a cup of wine in his hand. "He was planning to send the boy to Dragonstone for fostering, you know... oh, but I'm speaking out of turn." The apple of his throat bobbed anxiously beneath the loose maester's chain. "I fear I've had too much of Lord Hunter's excellent wine. The prospect of bloodshed has my nerves all a-fray..."

"You are mistaken, Maester," Catelyn said. "It was Casterly Rock, not Dragonstone, and those arrangements were made after the Hand's death, without my sister's consent."

The maester's head jerked so vigorously at the end of his absurdly long neck that he looked half a puppet himself. "No, begging your forgiveness, my lady, but it was Lord Jon who-"

A bell tolled loudly below them. High lords and serving girls alike broke off what they were doing and moved to the balustrade. Below, two guardsmen in sky-blue cloaks led forth Tyrion Lannister. The Eyrie's plump septon escorted him to the statue in the center of the garden, a weeping woman carved in veined white marble, no doubt meant to be Alyssa.

"The bad little man," Lord Robert said, giggling. "Mother, can I make him fly? I want to see him fly."

"Later, my sweet baby," Lysa promised him.

"Trial first," drawled Ser Lyn Corbray, "then execution."