Summary

A collection of various prompts and oneshots featuring the relationship between Jaime Lannister and Brienne of Tarth. Stories include everything from AUs to episode remixes.

Notes

Anonymous prompted: "For your GOT prompts: Jaime finds he can't sleep without Brienne"

This is set early in Season 4, as I'm fascinated by what exactly Brienne was doing during the weeks she was at Kings Landing with Jaime. This is my first Game of Thrones fic, so I hope it reads well.

I hope you enjoy, Anon!
Jaime Lannister twisted under crimson sheets, staring upwards at the canopy of his bed. He had tried plying himself with wine this time, but tonight was yet another failed attempt. He had thought, in his apparent naivety, that returning to Kings Landing would give him some peace. That he could fucking sleep. But no. The few times he had managed to drift off in the weeks since his return, he would wake cold and soaked in sweat. Sleep was lost, then. He refused to let the nightmares claim him once more.

Jaime had tried wine. He'd tried coming into his hand. He'd even tried counting little lions like Cersei's septa had suggested when they were little. Nothing worked.

Grimacing, Jaime threw off the sheets and stormed to the nearby table. He reached for the jug of wine with his right hand. He pushed the goblet aside with his left. FUCK!

His body folded itself into the nearest chair. He needed to be awake, alert, ready to protect the King. Everyone looked at him now – the knight with only one good hand – and expected him to falter, fail, fall. And he would if he didn't get some wretched sleep. His room was too quiet; the sheets too soft. There was the distant sound of the ocean and the occasional patter of footfall but no noise. No birds in the trees or animals in the undergrowth. No grass underneath his head and dirt underneath his fingertips.

No soft, blue eyes seeking his when he awoke.

Oh. Oh.

Barely thinking, Jaime began pulling on a pair of breeches and a shirt. He barely glanced over his shoulder at his empty bed before he left his room and headed for hers. He knew where it was, of course. Had shown it to her himself: a safe place to sleep and rest and plan; better than any inn in the city. She would be fine sleeping, unlike him. She always had been. He tied up to tree trunks whilst she slept nearby; one hand on her sword after checking his bonds three times before she allowed herself to slumber. Soft, even breaths amongst the drunken snores of Locke and his men. A hand pressed against his arm, both sleeping close after the bear pit; neither trusting the men around them, only each other.

And always those blue eyes watching him when he finally woke.

Jaime kept to the shadows as he approached the room given to Brienne. He'd spent enough time sneaking in and out of bedrooms to be considered an expert. In another time, he would have sought solace in the bed of his sister. Another distraction like the wine or the imaginary lions. He might sleep better, afterwards, but not in her bed. Jaime quickly arrived at Brienne's door. He considered knocking. Didn't want the sound to travel. Thankfully, he had the only other key to this room: there were too many here he did not know, or trust.

Slipping inside, he closed the door with a soft snick and locked it. The sound of the key was enough to rouse Brienne, twisted in deep blue sheets. She reached for a knife under her pillow: one of the chef's cutlery gone astray. "Are you going to stab me, my Lady?"

Brienne rubbed her face, peering into the dark. "Ser Jaime?"

He tried to ignore the twist in his gut at those words from her lips. "The very same."
Jaime toed off his boots, and approached the bed. Brienne pushed herself up against the headboard, gathering her sheets as a shield in front of her, like he hadn’t seen all of her in Harrenhal. He rolled his eyes. "Don't worry; not interested."

"Then what are you doing here?"

Jaime collapsed onto the side of the bed nearest the open window. "I need to sleep."

"Surely you have your own room. Or did they give it to someone else whilst you were away?"

"Away. Like I was studying in Dorne, and not a prisoner of your fine self." Jaime reached behind him and started squashing the pillows just the way he liked them. He leant back against them, and huffed out a breath. "No, no, I'm just finding it difficult."

"Nightmares?"

If it was anyone else, he would have offered a scathing remark at the idea of Jaime Lannister suffering from nightmares. But Brienne wasn't anybody else. She was her, and he could trust her. "Amongst other things."

He looked at Brienne, then, and noticed the slight bloodshot of her eyes. Her wine jug was empty. Perhaps she had counted sparkling sapphires or the waves against the coast of Tarth. Jaime tried not to think of her touch, softer than he had expected, against her own body. His eyes flickered away lest she work out what he was thinking. It seemed he wasn't the only one having trouble. He stared at the canopy above her bed.

"It's not quite the night sky, is it?"

"No, it's not."

Jaime felt movement in the bed beside him. Brienne had accepted that he had not come to ravish her in the night, and was lying parallel to him in the bed. Her slow, familiar breathing filled the room. Jaime felt the tension ease out of him. Her presence beside him was welcome; he hadn't realised how much he had come to miss it. They both stared, upwards, at starless fabric. Every day for well over a year he had dreamed of returning to Kings Landing. Now he longed for cool nights, soft breaths, and a purpose he no longer had.

He slept, and he dreamed, and he woke first.

Dawn was slowly creeping into Brienne's room. Jaime knew he should leave; make his way to his own rooms before someone realised he was missing. But not yet. Not until he saw her eyes. They'd stared accusingly at first, as if he had tried to escape during the night. Then with pity, and fear, as she watched his grief overwhelm him. Sadness was the closest word he could use to describe her eyes in the last days. Jaime liked to believe that it was disappointment that their journey was coming to an end.

Brienne stirred. Jaime waited, body poised, as her eyes opened. She sunk against the sheets, hiding a whisper of a smile in the linens of her pillows. "Good morning, Ser Jaime."

"Good morning, Lady Brienne."

She ran a hand through her short hair, and twisted away from him. He could already see that the line of her shoulders had fallen; that this night together had done more than provide for him. Brienne risked a glance over her shoulder; a fine pink blush staining her pale cheeks. This was probably the first night she'd ever spent in bed with a man. It was a first for him, too.
"I trust you slept well," she said, as if they were meeting in the gardens or in the hall.

"I did. Your snoring is better than the sound of the ocean for getting me off to sleep."

She threw a pillow at his head where once she would have thrown bags, or shoved him up against the trunk of a tree. He made to leave. This would be the only night he would indulge in such weakness. A *Lannister* did not have nightmares. A *Lannister* did not require someone in the bed beside him to sleep. But, as Jaime looked at Brienne from the arch of the doorway, he realised he was lying to himself.

This was only the first.
"Honours and Oaths" [Brienne and Jaime find Arya together]

Chapter Notes

Anonymous prompted: "jaime joins brienne and pod to find the stark girls."

This is a remix of 4.10, and I hope you enjoy!

He could hear the waves crashing against the rocks. The morning sunlight was thin, but provided him enough light to see by. He smelled sea air and stale wine; sweat and leather. They'd been sparring in the courtyard again. Only this time they'd moved faster, hit harder; every word an innuendo, a push to here. Jaime looked away from the sapphire waters to the woman lying in the bed beside him. Cerulean sheets and alabaster skin. There was a bruise on her collarbone from where the training sword had struck. Another, further up the column of her neck, where he had marked her as his.

"Brienne…"

"Jaime." Dull pain exploded in his side. "Get up."

His vision shifted: gone were the cool rooms of what he imagined Evenfall Hall to look like. Instead, he was greeted by reality. The sky was murky; fog rolling in across the many, many hills that would take them to the Eyrie. The air was fresh and biting. The woman from his dreams was not lying naked underneath a single bedsheet, but instead dressed in his armour and aiming another well-deserved kick to his ribs.

"What, what?" Jaime cursed, getting to his feet.

"Podrick didn't hobble the horses."

Jaime was suddenly wide awake. It was thirty miles to the Eyrie from here, and Jaime's boots had already seen better days. Not for the first time, he regretted sending Podrick as Brienne's squire. She hadn't wanted him; no doubt did not need him. But at the time, Jaime had thought that he was doing a favour for his brother, and he had loathed the idea of Brienne travelling alone. Of course, spending a day in Kings Landing as the Kingslayer once more – rather than Ser Jaime – had given him an entirely different perspective. If they'd left together, rather than him joining their party five days later, things would be entirely different. Starting with the fact that they would have horses.

"I'm sorry, my Lord; I swear—"

Jaime waved his hand in Podrick's direction. "Look around; see if you can find them. If not, let's hope – for your sake – we can find some to steal."

Podrick peered into the depths of the Vale, searching for horses that were long gone. As was Brienne: Jaime turned to speak to her, to offer some shared remark about the state of her squire, but she had already stormed off. Perhaps she, too, was regretting his decision to force Podrick upon her. Jaime was under no illusions that Brienne wanted him all to herself, but they had an understanding, she and him. She would need time to cool off and collect her thoughts; he needed to piss. By the time he was done, he followed the Lady up a mountain. Just in time to see the Mountain's brother, Sandor
Clegane, facing off against Brienne.

"Go on, Brienne of *fucking* Tarth; tell me that's not Lannister gold." Clegane's gaze shifted over her shoulder. "Tell me that's not Jaime *fucking* Lannister."

Brienne unsheathed her sword. The Hound unsheathed his. Arya Stark – *alive, somehow* – threw a rock at his head and missed. She ran, steel clashed against steel, and Jaime took chase.

The grass was wet underneath his boots; rubble coming loose as he chased Arya through the hills of the Vale. Behind him, he heard the familiar clangs and grunts of a fight. His stomach twisted at the thought of Brienne against the Hound, but he knew his place was in finding the Stark girl. Brienne was more than capable in a fight, and she would never forgive Jaime in this world or the next if he let Arya slip through their fingers.

Jaime came out into a clearing; a sheer drop ahead of him. Arya stared at the edge, as if considering her options. His foot dislodged some stones, and her head snapped back at the noise. She thrust a thin blade in his direction.

He laughed. "Are you going to fight me, girl? You're as arrogant as your father was."

"I don't know. You've only got one hand. Might make us even."

Jaime smiled. He'd been just the same at her age: bold and brash as long as he had a sword in his hand. He took out his; re-forged from her father's. *Two swords; two girls.* He was supposed to use this to protect her, not to fight her. "We're here to help you, Arya; keep you safe."

"Liar." She took her stance. "You're the Queen's brother. You're here to kill me. You're *all* here to kill me."

He drew back, affronted. Not for his own sake, but for the woman risking her life against the Hound's blade to ensure Arya Stark wasn't sold for a small pile of gold. "I may be many things, Stark, but Brienne of Tarth is no liar."

"Doesn't matter. She's already dead."

Arya pushed forward, smacking her blade against the side of Jaime's. He knocked her away, but she kept coming. He recognised her style; vaguely remembering one of the Kingsguard laughing about the *dancing* lessons Lord Stark had organised for his youngest daughter. Still, it wasn't enough. It took a single blow to knock the sword from her hand, and Arya Stark to go scrambling after it. If this was a real fight, she would be dead already. Thankfully for her, Jaime wanted to keep the little brat alive.

A noise echoed through the valley. Screams, curses, and the sound of someone falling. Jaime's heart plummeted. "Brienne."

"Argh!" was a war cry closer to home, and Jaime hissed as Arya Stark's thin blade pinched his right shin. He spat a multitude of curses; Arya using the momentary distraction to disappear once more into the Vale.

Over the top of the hill, Podrick appeared. "Where's Arya Stark?"

The more important question was, "Where's Lady Brienne?"

His wound was nothing more than a scratch but Podrick, ever the faithful squire, helped him traverse the rocky terrain. Jaime rested his hand on the hilt of his sword, ready to wield it should the Hound
have survived. The voice in the back of his head, the voice that sounded much like his sister, taunted him over his hope that the Hound had been the one to fall. He's bigger, stronger, doesn't give a flying fuck about honours or oaths. But he knew. He knew.

And there she stood. Brienne of Tarth, more a knight than most in the Seven Kingdoms. Her hair was damp and windswept. There was blood around her mouth, and bruises blooming across her cheeks. The blue armour he had gifted her was stained dark. Oathkeeper lay at her feet; her fists the final weapon that ended the Hound. She peered into the growing light of the morning, gaze settling on the pair of them. On him.

"Ser Jaime…"

He pushed Podrick aside and went to her. The rush of battle made her tremble in his arms. Her fingers, bloody and tense, gripped him; anchoring herself. He brushed aside strands of blonde hair, staring straight into familiar blue eyes. He'd known it, in the Riverlands, when she'd killed those three men. He'd known the warrior she was under that ill-fitting armour, with a poor man's blade in her hand. But to beat the Hound…he'd never tell her, would never give her the satisfaction. But she would have beaten him, before. He knew it now.

"I'm glad we're on the same side, Brienne," he muttered, easing her down into a sitting position. Podrick was at the edge of the cliff, staring at the bleeding mess that was once Sandor Clegane. Jaime whistled. "Help the lady with her armour, Podrick."

A hand encircled his wrist as he tried to loosen the laces on her left side. "What are you doing?"

"I need to see how badly you're hurt." The pads of his fingers grazed her jaw. Blood was smeared across her cheeks, her lips. "There's blood in your mouth."

"It's not—it's not all mine." Her pupils were unfocused; her body slightly swaying. The rush was beginning to wane. The pain would hit soon. "I—I think I bit his ear off."

Jaime pressed his thumb to the scar above her top lip. "That's my girl."

Her blue eyes grew stormy; Jaime suddenly felt adrift. He swallowed as he searched for a way to save face. "…the girl, Arya, she stabbed me and ran off. I don't know where she is now."

Brienne lifted her chin out of his grasp. "She's behind you."

Jaime then felt the familiar prick of steel against the side of his neck. Arya came into view. Suddenly the odds were very much in her favour: Brienne was weak and bleeding, Podrick could barely hold a fork let alone a sword. He wasn't as quick as he used to be. All of them froze; waiting for her judgement. She jabbed the sword further into his neck, but not hard enough to draw blood.

"What are you doing to her?"

"Removing her armour. I need to see where she's hurt, so I can help."

Another jab. "I thought you said her name was Tarth."

Brienne spoke, this time; her eyes darting between Jaime's own and the blade at his neck. "It is, my Lady. Brienne of Tarth. I was sworn to Renly Baratheon, and after his death, your mother took me into her service. She sent me with your brother's prisoner to petition the release of you and your sister."

"You're not a Lannister?"
"Gods, no."

Any murmur of annoyance was quickly silenced by the blade against his throat. Arya turned to Podrick, next. "And you? What about you?"

"I'm just a squire, my Lady. The Lannisters – his sister – want me dead."

"You and me, both." Arya rotated the blade against the pulse in his neck. Killed by a child, in the Vale. He'd dreamt of his death many a time, but it was never like this. "So if she's not a Lannister, and he's wanted by the Lannisters, what are you doing here? Lannisters only care about other Lannisters."

"They do," Jaime admitted. It was why he had never told his sister how he'd really lost his hand. She would never have been able to grasp why. "But this Lannister happens to care a great deal about this woman." In front of him, Brienne stiffened. "And I'm mildly fond of Podrick."

Arya released the blade at his throat. Jaime sagged into the dirt, grateful to find his end another day. Brienne, blood caked around her mouth and knuckles, lifted her head as she addressed the young Stark. "Arya, Ser Jaime and I both swore an oath to your mother to keep you safe. We want to keep it, if you'll let us."

She didn't answer. For a moment, Jaime thought she would run. Back to the North, off to Braavos: far away from their oaths to a dead woman. Arya's fingers twitched around the hilt of her sword: his own did that, when he was nervous. She didn't answer. Just pushed Jaime back onto his haunches, and helped Podrick loosen Brienne's armour to see how badly the Hound had wanted her dead.

One down, Jaime thought, as he watched Arya and Podrick ease the breastplate from Brienne. One to go.
"The Traveller" [Post 8.04, Jaime meets a weary traveller that makes him reconsider his choices]

Chapter Summary

Post 8.04, Jaime encounters a traveller heading North that makes him reconsider the choices he's made.

Chapter Notes

So bygone-age prompted "could you do a fix it where she sees through his leaving speech in 8x05 and convinces him to stay with her and help Sansa in the North?" This is probably nothing *whatsoever* what you had in mind, but I couldn't shake the idea of someone else seeing through Jaime and making him see sense. I hope you enjoy it all the same!

Full disclosure: I have *not* seen the goodbye scene in 8.04 because I do not want to subject myself to that sort of pain. But I've seen gifsets and had to dig up the transcripts, so I hope this makes in-canon sense. Also, there’s no actual Brienne in this story (she’s busy throwing knives at a portrait of our boy), but she’s mentioned a lot. Happy reading!

There was an inn along the Kings Road. Candlelight poured from open doors as drunkards pissed outside. Horses lined the walls; travellers fleeing the North and King's Landing congregating at this one spot. Jaime Lannister was the former. He kept his black gloves on, and his hood up, as he took a seat in the back of the inn. A serving wench passed him, sliding a tankard of ale onto his table. She gave him a sultry smile, but moved onto the next customer when it wasn't returned. Jaime wasn't interested in a fleeting smile, but moved onto the next customer when it wasn't returned. Jaime wasn't interested in a fleeting fancy. His thoughts were occupied by another.

He took a sip of ale. Weak; bitter. A fitting drink for the Kingslayer.

"Sorry, lad, mind if I sit here?"

A portly man, with an inch or two on Jaime himself, forced himself into his eye line. There was a sword on the man's belt and a full tankard in his hand. Jaime considered, for a moment, telling him to fuck off. But there were no other tables in the inn, and he didn't want to draw any unnecessary attention. "Not at all."

The man smiled, and took up the stool opposite Jaime's chair. He drank half the tankard whilst glancing around the inn, taking in the scenery. A whore was pressed against a heavily bearded man in the corner. Two were playing a game of cards; a chicken under their feet. Someone launched into a verse of The Bear and the Maiden Fair and Jaime gripped his tankard so hard it shook. The man noticed the spilt ale across the table.

"You alright, lad?"
"Fine." Jaime didn't need the concern of a stranger. "It's a long journey to King's Landing."

"I understand, lad." Do you now, old man? "I've been travelling for some odd weeks on a ship, and now on a ruddy horse to take me up North."

"You picked a good time to visit. Winter's come, and the dead are where they should be: in the ground."

It was a throwaway comment; Jaime was sure his drinking companion had no idea what had befallen the North over the past few months. But in the dim light of the inn, the man's eyes darkened. "It's true, then. About the dead. My daughter—she wrote to me, you see, to tell me of what was to come. It's why I've come all this way. It's been years since I've clapped eyes on her and I couldn't bear—"

"—the living won. That war is over."

Jaime took another sip of his ale, hoping the man would soon find another table. But he didn't. Instead, the man reached over and gripped Jaime's hand. "Were you there, lad?"

"I'm not a—" No unnecessary attention. "Yes, I was. I fought the dead. Hundreds of them. And then their king raised them again, and we fought hundreds more."

"You're a good man."

Jaime scoffed. "Because I fought the dead? It was nothing more than a fight for survival."

"No, no, my daughter said that most fighting were Northerners. I've been sailing for years, lad, I know an accent when I hear one. Lannisport, correct?" Jaime didn't answer. "Fine, lad, keep your secrets. But if you came all the way to sodding Winterfell to fight the dead, and possibly die in the cold and snow; you're a good lad in my eyes."

You're better than she is. You're a good man.

"What I see now, though, is a troubled man." His drinking companion would not stop talking! His cheeks were ruddy as he summoned a second tankard of ale, and one for Jaime, too. "Something is weighing you down, lad. I'd be more than happy to lend an ear; help you get it off your chest."

"What about if I cut yours off?" Jaime took a sip of his ale, enjoying the way his companion's eyes widened. "That would certainly make me feel better."

For a moment, everything stopped. His companion froze, mouth open; taking in Jaime's words. On instinct, Jaime rested a hand upon the hilt of Widow's Wail; in his head, he worked out how many men he would need to cut down to make it to the door. But then his companion laughed, booming and bright, and clapped Jaime upon the shoulder.

"Good one, lad. I suppose it is none of my business. But a friendly word of advice: whatever you're running away from will always be there. You could sail to the Red Waste and your demons would follow." His companion patted Jaime's hand. "If I put fifty gold dragons on it being a woman, would that be a smart bet?"

Jaime said nothing. He didn't need to: his expression said it all. There was another pat to his hand. "Was she taken from you, lad? By the dead? I know a little something about that: lost my wife many a year ago."

"She didn't die. She's—" Brave and honest and stubborn and beautiful. Maybe if Jaime just gave him an answer, the man would seek someone else's ear to bend; another poor soul's problems to fix.
"She deserves better than the likes of me, alright?"

"You poor, lad? I could lend you if you need money to sway things with her father." *Maybe not.* His companion swept the back of his hand across his mouth. "Money should not get in the way of love."

Jaime snorted. He tried to imagine this man and Tywin Lannister in a room. Two men could not have been more different. "It's not money. She deserves a better kind of man. Someone honourable; someone who could be her equal."

"But she loves you?"

"*Yes, she does.*" They had not said the words in their brief time together in Winterfell. But Jaime had felt it in every look Brienne threw his way; every soft touch and caress. He'd heard it in the way she said his name as they made love. He heard it in his own voice, too. "I'm not a good man. I don't want her tied to me when she could be with another."

"But you could be happy together?"

What didn't this man understand? "She deserves better."

"Sounds to me like you don't think you deserve her." Jaime was silent. The man plodded on, regardless. "Good. Any man who thinks he deserves better doesn't really. Any man who thinks he doesn't deserve his wife at all will work day and night to keep her happy. Shame you're heading to King's Landing, lad. Wouldn't mind introducing you to my daughter."

"Why?"

The man shrugged. "Any man that willingly fights against the dead is a good man. My daughter deserves a good man. A man, who would rather break his own heart than hurt the woman he loves, is a good man."

"Well, then, I've proven you false. I'm not a good man; I *hurt* her." It had taken days for that image, Brienne standing in the cold courtyard begging him to stay, to recede into the back of his mind. "I said things. I shouldn't have—I let things get too far. It would have been easier if we'd never indulged how we felt."

"Can't undo the past, lad; can only shape the future." His companion finished his tankard, but did not call for another. "You can join me up North if you like. Tell her how you feel."

"And then what? We get married, and have children, and spend the rest of our lives in contentment?" Jaime slumped into his seat. "After all the things I've done, I don't deserve that."

"Are you sure, lad? Tell me, does your woman know the things you've done?" Jaime nodded. "And loves you anyway?" Jaime opened his mouth to argue, but his companion waved him off. "She must see something in you, lad, to love you like she does. Maybe you don't deserve a good end; some men don't. But doesn't your lady deserve to grow old with the man she loves, if that's what she wants?"

Jaime said nothing. He could sit and list his crimes in this inn, and this man would *surely* agree that he didn't deserve Brienne's heart. He didn't deserve her trust, her faith, her love. He didn't deserve her in his bed, and he would hate himself every day that he had ruined her in that fashion. No, Jaime said nothing. Just watched his drinking companion nod, once, and leave the table to go pay his tab. By the time Jaime had finished his drink and pissed, the man was gone. He'd paid Jaime's tab, too.

Outside, Jaime found his horse and decided to ride for a little longer before making camp. His eagerness was not to get to King's Landing, but to get further and further away from Winterfell. He
hoped the pain would lessen as he covered more ground. He doubted it, however. Leaving her, the way he did, was just another reason why he didn't deserve her.

Whilst many of the inn's occupants lingered inside, there was a single soul waiting in the cold. It was his drinking companion, staring up at the night sky. He smiled as Jaime approached. "I'd hoped it was you. Sorry to hold you, lad, but I had a question. It's still a good ride to Winterfell, and I need to know what to expect when I get there. I...I need to know whether I'm going to hug my daughter, or bury her."

"I know the names of most of the dead. Who's your daughter?"

Before he even said the words, Jaime knew. He couldn't believe he hadn't seen it before; after all, those eyes were burned into his memory. "Brienne. Brienne of Tarth. Tall, blonde. Can't say very much more about her; I haven't seen her since Robert Baratheon was on the throne."

"She's alive."

Relief flooded the man's expression. Then, suddenly, Lord Selwyn Tarth gripped Jaime's shoulders and pulled him into a hug. His stocky arms wrapped around Jaime; the other man choking back a sob. For a moment, Jaime held him back. Lord Selwyn celebrated the knowledge that he would see his beloved daughter again. Jaime grieved, as he never would. When they parted, Lord Selwyn rubbed his eye like a fleck of dust had crawled inside. "Thank you, lad."

"It's no hardship. She's well-respected in the North. An incredible warrior, too; she commanded the left flank in the Battle of the Long Night. You should be very proud."

"Oh, I am." Lord Selwyn smiled – they shared the same wry smile – and nudged Jaime's shoulder. "You know, lad, I could introduce you, if you haven't been already. She'd like you: I know she would. Good man with a good sword: all she's ever wanted."

Jaime couldn't fight the sad smile that overwhelmed his face. All she's ever wanted. "From what I know of Ser Brienne, she could do a lot better than I."

Lord Selwyn's eyes bulged. "Ser Brienne? My girl's a knight?"

Fuck. He was miles away from Winterfell, and he still couldn't stop himself from hurting her. That news should have been hers. "She's--she's the finest I've ever met, my Lord. In all things."

A shadow passed over Lord Selwyn's face; a slight narrowing of his brow. But then he clapped Jaime on the shoulder once more, and turned to ready his horse. "Thank you for the news, lad. Good luck on your journey to King's Landing."

"Thank you. And good luck on your journey North."

They both found themselves on horseback, on the dirt road, at the same time. Their horses trotted along until they came to a fork. One would take Lord Selwyn to see his daughter for the first time in years. The other would take Jaime to King's Landing, to his sister, and to what would be his end. Lord Selwyn nodded softly at him, as Jaime peered into the gloom of the Kings Road.

"You know, it's probably best I didn't introduce you to my daughter. From the letters I've had over the years, it sounds like she's quite smitten with another knight. He's a good man, too. Only the best for my little girl." Lord Selwyn puffed his chest, smiling at Jaime. "This man saved the entire population of King's Landing, you know. A good man, with a good sword."

All she's ever wanted.
Jaime closed his eyes; took a deep breath. *You don't need to die with her. Stay here. Stay with me.* After a moment, he turned his horse onto the road, and hoped he would not live to regret his decision. He felt the dull ache that had begun upon leaving Winterfell turn into a stabbing pain with every stretch of dark countryside he passed. Half a mile away from the inn, he caught up to Lord Selwyn.

*I don't deserve you, Brienne, but I want you. Gods hope that is enough.*
"The Bear and the Maiden Fair" [Jaime and Brienne's daughter tells their story]

Chapter Summary

Five-year-old Catelyn Lannister shares her favourite bedtime story with her father and Uncle. Spoiler alert: it's the time her father jumped into a bear pit.

Chapter Notes

Anonymous prompted: "Braime kid fic".

This is rather fluffy (although Catelyn is quite a violent storyteller), and I hope you enjoy. There's a blink-and-you'll-miss-it reference to Sansa/Tyrion, but it's literally just a side comment. Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"The Gremlin of Casterly Rock." Tyrion smiled against the rim of his goblet, staring at the golden child currently thrusting a wooden sword in the direction of the drapes. "I must admit, it does suit her."

Jaime, affronted on behalf of his daughter, glared. "It does not."

But it did. It really, really did. The Septa had come into his chambers not an hour before, sharp nails biting around Catelyn Lannister's wrist, and proclaimed she would no longer administer to The Gremlin of Casterly Rock. She was not the first septon to take her leave, either. In her five short years, Catelyn had seen off double that, and would probably see off several more before she turned ten. Despite being the daughter of Lord Lannister and the Lady of Tarth, Catelyn did not behave like other highborn daughters. She rode and fought and played increasingly dangerous games. She had no interest in needlepoint, dolls, or dresses.

She was her mother's daughter, and Jaime could not have been prouder. But it still didn't solve the problem that they were, yet again, without a septon.

"So, what are you going to do?" Tyrion asked as he refilled his goblet. He offered the decanter to his brother, but Jaime waved him off. His hands and arms were too preoccupied with the twelve-week-old daughter he could not stop holding. "You'll need to find someone for her, and for Joanna, too."

"I know, I know." He wanted to find someone quickly, before Brienne found out they'd lost another. After a difficult pregnancy, and trouble in the North from a handful of Bolton's former men, Brienne had enough on her plate. "I'll make enquiries in the morning. Hopefully news of the Gremlin won't have travelled too far."

It was only for a few more weeks, anyway. Then the Lions of the Sapphire Isle would be making the trip south so Joanna could meet her grandfather. Catelyn could swim and climb and play with the local children. They were used to the Evenstar's daughter running around in breeches waving a
wooden sword; they would not be put off by Catelyn's antics. She was a handful, but Jaime loved her more and more each day. He saw himself in her smile, in the way she gripped the wooden sword they had long given up trying to confiscate. Her eyes were Brienne's; Catelyn's stubbornness certainly from his wife as well.

Smiling, he looked at the golden babe swaddled in his arms. If Joanna was anything like her older sister, she would be incredible.

Lost in thoughts of how lucky he had become, Jaime did not notice the drapes crashing to the floor until Tyrion began to laugh and his daughter turned, hiding the wooden sword behind her back. "It's not my fault."

Heaving a sigh, Jaime used his left hand to usher his daughter away from the window. "Come on, little lion, it's nearly time for bed. Why don't you tell your Uncle Tyrion a story?" Anything to stop you destroying more of the room.

Catelyn nodded eagerly, having a whole rafter of stories at her disposal. Their friends, smitten by the lion cub, often regaled her with tales of the various wars that had preceded her birth. She turned to Tyrion, who had given her many stories of her father as a boy. "What story would you like to hear, Uncle?"

Tyrion shrugged. "Your favourite, niece."

She thought for a moment. "The Bear and the Maiden Fair!"

"No." Both Catelyn and Tyrion turned; surprised that he had spoken so vehemently against an old folk song. But the version Catelyn knew was not sung along roads and in taverns. It had been told, and repeated, many a night until Catelyn knew the story by heart. Tyrion, however, had heard not a whisper, and Jaime intended to keep it that way. "A different story. What about the one with the pies?"

But his brother, smelling blood in the water, turned to his excitable niece with a grin. "No, no, I want to hear about the bear and the maiden. Ignore your father, niece: go on!"

Catelyn glanced sideways at Jaime, who gave a single nod of approval. Might as well get this over with. His daughter then launched into her story. "Years ago, two knights were on a quest to King's Landing. But they were set upon by villains!"

Tyrion made the appropriate astonished noise. He leaned forward; both men smiling at how Catelyn's face had lit up. "Go on."

"The knights fought to get away. But it wasn't enough. The villains dragged the blue knight into the dark. The golden knight fought bravely, trying to save her, but lost his hand to their villainy."

Catelyn's face was scrunched; her distaste for the men who had – unbeknownst to her – tried to rape her mother and had, in fact, brutalised her father clear upon her features. Tyrion shot Jaime a sideways glance. He could read between the lines; this was the sanitised version of his brother and Brienne's adventures south. Jaime could not recall telling his brother, his father, or even his sister why he had truly lost his hand. A Lannister in Northern occupied territory was enough of a reason. That he had been protecting the virtue of a woman he would later call his wife was a secret he had wanted to keep for himself.

"Go on, Catelyn. What happened next?"

"They rode for days: through mud and rain. The golden knight wanted to give up, but the blue
knight told him he *had* to fight. Days later, they came to Har–Har—"

"—Harrenhal," Jaime helpfully interjected.

Catelyn nodded. "There, another villain waited. The golden knight's father would pay his son's weight in gold to have him returned to King's Landing. But the blue knight was thought of as a villain, and they *refused* to let her go. The two knights said goodbye: this was the only way they could finish their quest."

Jaime didn't have to look to know his brother was watching him. He kept his head down, watching his youngest child sleep in his arms instead. This story seemed like a lifetime ago. Brienne, in that ill-fitting pink dress, calling him *Ser Jaime*. He'd suspected, then, what he knew when he'd said goodbye to her months later in King's Landing: she would carry the best parts of him with her, always.

"Continue, my dear niece. What happened next?"

"On the road, the golden knight found out the villains meant to kill the blue knight that very day!" Tyrion thrust a hand over his mouth in fake shock. The blue knight *clearly* survived; she was currently having a very long meeting with the Queen of the North. "The golden knight then forced the villain's men to take him back to rescue her!"

"You mean that the golden knight could have made his way back to King's Landing, on his own, but decided to go back and rescue the blue knight? Risking his own life in the process?" Catelyn stared at her uncle dismissively; she had yet to understand the subtleties of adult conversation, and the clear dig Tyrion was throwing in his direction. "How *extraordinary*. It almost sounds like he was in love with her."

"He was!" Catelyn bounced, getting ready for her favourite part of the story. "When he returned to Har–Har–that place, he found that the villains had thrown the blue knight into a bear pit!"

Catelyn mimicked the angry stance of a bear as Tyrion spat out a mouthful of wine. Joanna stirred in Jaime's arms, and he glared at both of them to be a *little* quieter.

"All the blue knight had to defend herself with was a single wooden sword." Catelyn wielded hers; affectionately nicknamed *claw*. "The golden knight, without thinking, jumped into the bear pit to save her!"

Jaime removed the goblet of wine from his brother's hand, lest any more of the soft furnishings be ruined by the antics of Lannisters.

"The golden knight said *get behind me*, and the blue knight *did*."

Tyrion chuckled at that. "Not without some form of protest, I'm sure."

"I'm pretty sure she told me to *piss off*," Jaime muttered; his daughter oblivious to the tête-à-tête that was happening in front of her. She was still pretending to be the bear.

"A few good men helped the blue knight out of the way of the bear's *big* claws." Catelyn's hands curled in front of her. "Then the blue knight helped the golden knight up. When they were both safe, the golden knight took the blue knight in his arms and *kissed* her."

Jaime coughed, not quite remembering *that* part of Catelyn's bedtime story. Tyrion, however, was *delighted*. "As he should! Saved the woman he loves from a bear, he *should* kiss her."
Catelyn nodded, agreeing with her uncle's assessment. "One of the villains, the one who'd cut off the golden knight's hand, took a step towards them. But the blue knight pushed him into the bear pit, where he was eaten alive by his own bear."

Tyrion swivelled his head in Jaime's direction. Jaime just stared, open mouthed, at the brutal additions to what had been a fairly tame bedtime story. Before the tale could continue in gods knows what direction, there was a single knock at the door. A maid entered, smiling pleasantly at the Lannister lions she found inside.

"I'm so sorry to disturb you Lord Lannister, Lord Lannister, but I've been asked to come take the girls to bed?"

"Of course."

Reluctantly, Jaime passed his daughter into someone else's arms. He'd been the same with Catelyn, until she was old enough to walk and run and climb. Having lost three children, and been kept at a distance from their births till their deaths, Jaime found himself unable to let go with his girls. Thankfully, everyone was as enamoured with his daughters as he was, and accepted that Ser Jaime Lannister often came with a little lion. Catelyn smiled at her baby sister before reaching to give her Uncle Tyrion a hug, and then her father.

Holding the maid's hand, she turned to her Uncle and smiled. "Tomorrow night, I'll tell you about the pies."

The two Lannister brothers watched the Lannister sisters be led from the room, before Tyrion rounded on Jaime. "Pies? After what I've just heard about you and Brienne and a bear, do I really want to hear this?"

"Possibly not. But you do get to find out what really happened to House Frey."

"And what happened to House Frey?"

"Arya Stark, apparently."

Tyrion shivered. "Remind me never to get on the bad side of that girl."

"Well, if you keep staring at her sister, you will."

Both men turned to the open doorway. Jaime's mouth went slack, still not used to seeing his wife in the clothes she wore for meetings. Dark breeches, soft blue tunics. Blonde hair now grown long, gracing her shoulders. Her sword – their sword – ever present on her belt. She bowed her head, still unused to the unyielding attention he placed upon her. Tyrion cleared his throat.

"If it's anything how my brother looks at you, Brienne, I imagine I'll be baked into a pie before sunrise. And on that cheerful note, I think I'll take my leave. Don't get eaten by any bears!"

Brienne raised a single eyebrow, but said nothing. Just held his gaze, and he hers, as his brother plodded across the room. He hadn't seen her since the dawn, and he'd missed her. Jaime waited until Tyrion closed the door behind him, before crossing the room in a few strides to hold his wife.

"They've just taken the girls to bed. A good thing you arrived: my arms were missing something to hold."

Brienne chuckled, winding her arms around his neck. "Who knew the Golden Lion could be so—"

"—romantic?"
"Ridiculous." Brienne teased her bottom lip with her teeth. "But don't stop."

"I don't intend to. Ridiculously in love with my wife: it's practically a badge of honour. If only my father could see me now." Of course, Jaime married with children was all Tywin Lannister had ever wanted. Naming the heir to the Rock after a Stark was the only way Jaime could piss him off. Brienne's fingers carded through his hair, and Jaime suddenly forgot all thoughts of his father: only the woman in front of him. "Catelyn's made some new additions to her favourite bedtime story. You push Locke into the bear pit now."

"I should have."

Jaime's arms tightened around her waist, bringing his wife flush against him. "I kiss you, now, after I rescue you from the pit."

Brienne stared, eyes darkening. "You should have."

"Even then?"

She nodded, leaning forward to place a kiss to the corner of his mouth. "Especially then."

Her hand slid across his cheek. Brienne's forehead rested against his, and they took a shared breath. In the stories he could kiss her, continue their quest to find the missing wolf girls, fight side by side against enemies they had fought alone. A part of Jaime ached for the time that had been wasted; the stories he could have lived with Brienne by his side. Still, they were together now. Married, with two children, and a third planned for when Joanna was old enough to hold a sword. They were writing new stories. And all of these ended happily.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!

If you have any suggestions for stories (including sequels) you'd like to see in this collection, feel free to prompt me in the comments, or at ddagent.tumblr.com :)
"Playing Pretend" [Three Men and a Little Lady AU]

Chapter Summary

Brienne helps Jaime rehearse for his audition. A 'Three Men and a Little Lady' AU.

Chapter Notes

So, anonymous prompted 'Loving all the GOT prompts, can I prompt a movie AU? Writer's choice'. I'm a huge movie fan, so I had lots of options. But I decided to go for one of my childhood favourites, 'Three Men and a Little Lady'. And, yes, Brienne is playing Tom Selleck's role.

A little background to this 'verse: Brienne was sharing an apartment with actor Tyrion and primary school teacher Pod when a baby was left on their doorstep. The baby belonged to Tyrion's brother Jaime, and their stepsister. She didn't want the child as she feared it would impact her career, and Jaime was too under the thumb to argue. So, rather than leaving it on the doorstep of a Sept, he gave it to his brother. Many baby shenanigans later, and Jaime returns to pick up baby Joanna as he realises he loves his daughter more than her mother. Completely overwhelmed, however, he agrees to move in with his brother, Brienne, and Podrick. They've been playing happy families for five years before the start of this fic.

A huge, HUGE thank you to everyone who has left comments and kudos on the previous stories in this collection. You're all so incredibly sweet, and I hope you're ready for lots more stories because I am *highly* inspired right now. Happy reading!

Brienne sat back in the armchair, looking over her class schedule for the coming week; enjoying the rare moment of quiet. Between the four adults and the five-year-old girl that lived in this three-storey house in King's Landing, quiet was a rarity. Taking a sip of coffee, Brienne crossed her own name out of the 10am fencing class. Joanna had a dentist appointment, but Podrick was at school, Tyrion was shooting a commercial, and Jaime had an audition.

If someone had told Brienne years ago that this would be her life – co-parenting a child with two brothers and a close friend – she wouldn't have believed it. Honestly, though, she couldn't imagine a better one.

But then Jaime Lannister swung into the second-floor library, and Brienne's stomach wrapped itself in knots. She could imagine a better life. One where it was just the three of them. Where Jaime, the man who had quickly become her best friend, was something more. She'd tried so hard to keep those feelings in a little box. It had been easier when Joanna was a baby: he was arrogant and rude and they were all sleep deprived. But now they ran together in the mornings, and he'd get her an ice pack after a particularly brutal class, and sometimes – sometimes – when it was just the three of them, she imagined he looked at her like he wanted that, too.
But right now, he wanted someone else. "Have you seen Tyrion?"

Brienne shook her head. "I think he went out with Shae."

"Fuck." Jaime leant against the nearest armchair, looking like he was on a modelling shoot rather than just standing around. He tapped a script book against his thigh. "He promised me we'd rehearse this scene together. It's for my audition next week."

"Well, you know your brother…" Brienne trailed off, both of them exchanging a well-worn look. There was a reason that, when Joanna had been dropped off on their doorstep with nothing more than a note, both she and Podrick had thought it completely in character that Tyrion Lannister had got a woman pregnant. "I'm sure he'll be back later."

"Sure."

Jaime huffed, annoyed at his brother's lack of consideration, and moved to leave. "Stay." Even though she had been enjoying the quiet, Brienne enjoyed Jaime's company more. "I could rehearse with you, if you'd like."

He smiled, half cocky and half charming: the smile that won auditions and made the mothers at Joanna's playgroup weak at their knees. It had a similar effect on Brienne, but she tried not to let it show. "You?"

"Sure," she said, shrugging in a way she hoped presented as casual.

Between late classes and the end of Jaime's play, they'd spent little time together over the last few weeks. A stolen afternoon in a quiet house was an opportunity Brienne could not pass up. Despite her determination to bury any romantic feelings she had for him, Jaime was still her best friend. She missed him.

Leaving her coffee cup and class schedule behind, Brienne took the few paces to join Jaime. "I've rehearsed a couple times with Tyrion. I was an excellent Knight of the Flowers. What's the play?"

Jaime showed her the cover. "Oathkeeper."

Brienne was vaguely familiar with the story; a romance played out during the period between the War of the Five Kings and the Long Night. Most of the scenes she'd rehearsed with Tyrion had been bawdy; her friend determined to hear her laugh with all the adlibs he'd thrown in. Brienne was under no illusions that this would be a very different kind of experience. She felt her skin warm as Jaime ushered her into position; her pulse race as his fingers brushed hers when he handed her the well-worn script book. His gaze was warm, unyielding: he'd clearly already slipped into character.

She turned her attention to the lines in front of her. "So, I'm Jeyne?"

"Yes," Jaime said. "See, I've put a little star next to Arthur's lines, because those are the ones I need to rehearse." He ducked out the way of the script book she swatted in his direction. "Just so you know, Jeyne is a very honourable, very stubborn woman. Who happens to be completely besotted by my character. Shouldn't be too much of a hardship for you."

Brienne rolled her eyes. "Are you ready or not?"

"By all means."

She found the first line in the section Jaime had earmarked, and launched into it with gusto. "I need your word!" she said. In front of her, Jaime held a hand in front of his mouth to stifle his laughter.
She dropped the script book and *glared.* "What? What? What did I do wrong?"

He stepped forward; his hands touching her shoulders, her arms in reassurance. "Nothing, *nothing.* But you're not trying to get the old septa at the back of the room to hear. This is an **intimate scene,** between two people who have shared so much. Who can't quite yet admit how they feel." He cleared his throat, suddenly looking at the carpet. "Be more…natural."

"Natural. Alright. I can do that."

Jaime stepped away again, and Brienne suddenly felt cold. She turned to the lines in front of her. Taking a deep breath, she stared at Jaime and began the scene. "I need your word. If I persuade him to abandon the castle, you'll grant us safe passage North."

He nodded. "You have my word. You have until nightfall."

The stage directions prompted 'Jeyne' to unlace the sword at her waist. Brienne didn't have a sword, but she mimed the actions and thrust the invisible blade in Jaime's direction. Years of playing make-believe with Joanna had given her some acting skills. Jaime smiled, staring fondly at her, before stepping forward to place his hand atop the sword – or in this case, Brienne's own hand.

"You gave it to me for a purpose," Brienne said, reciting the lines from the book in her other hand. "I've achieved that purpose."

Jaime swallowed, speaking with more emotion than she'd ever heard him speak. "It's yours. It will *always* be yours."

And then Jaime stepped forward and kissed her.

It was a soft brush against her lips. His left hand still held hers; his right smoothing over the waistband of her jeans. His lips were soft, and gentle, and when Jaime pulled away Brienne noticed his eyes were closed. He opened them to find hers wide, her mouth slightly open.

"What did you do that for?"

Jaime tapped the book in her free hand. "It's in the script."

Cheeks burning, still feeling the imprint of Jaime's lips on hers, Brienne turned to the book. She blinked once, twice, as the words came into focus. "Well, *actually,* it says 'She kisses him'."

It was meant to be a criticism; pointing out Jaime's error to throw *him* on the back foot like his lips had done to her. But instead Jaime just smiled. His tongue slid out to wet his top lip, and Brienne felt like suggesting they read lines together was the biggest mistake of her life. Next to falling in love with the biological father of a child she co-parented, who would never, *ever* see her in another light.

"Do you want to try the lines again?" Jaime asked.

Correction: *second* biggest mistake. "Alright."

Jaime didn't move away. He stayed, right in front of her, as Jeyne tried to return Arthur's sword. Brienne looked at their joined hands, and brushed a thumb over the back of Jaime's. She tried to imagine returning such a precious gift; her mind recalling how it had felt after Jaime had tried to take Joanna back to the Rock all those years ago. But he'd come back, come home, and they had been a family ever since. She couldn't imagine losing Joanna. But she wasn't really hers to lose.

"You gave it to me for a purpose." Her voice was little more than a whisper. She took in a shaky
breath, trying to ignore the falter in her voice. "I've achieved that purpose."

"It's yours." Brienne didn't think Jaime was talking about the sword. _It's his heart. He's giving her his heart._ "It will always be yours."

Brienne wasn't an actor. The beat she allowed for her words to sink in was not out of dramatic effect, but a moment to understand that Jaime was staring at her lips. That his eyes had darkened, that his breathing grew more erratic. The thumb she dragged over Jaime's cheekbone wasn't to draw out the moment of anticipation. It was to feel the heat of his skin, the slight intake of breath. Then she was kissing him. Her lips slid over his: warm and soft and tasting of bitter coffee. Mango and passionfruit overwhelmed her senses: he'd used her shampoo _again_. The thought of Jaime smelling like her—_wanting_ to smell like her—left her moaning into his mouth. The script book clattered to the floor as she slung her left arm around his shoulders and carded her fingers through his hair.

"_Brienne._"

She was suddenly against the bookcase. The spines dug into the rivets of her back; Jaime's arm firm around her waist. The hand that had held the imaginary sword now curled into her hair, pulling her head to one side so Jaime's lips could leave their mark along her throat. The prick of his stubble rubbed against her skin; Brienne wrapped her leg around Jaime's hip to pull him closer. There was a _no dates_ rule in this house that Brienne had never broken, but now she would throw out all the household rules if it meant Jaime would never stop kissing her. He pulled back, for a single moment, before diving in again. Her mouth opened to him; his tongue slipping inside.

"_Gods—_" Brienne missed the script book. What came next? Did Arthur and Jeyne consummate their relationship in the red and gold tent? Because Brienne could feel Jaime half hard against her thigh, and she _really_ wanted to help him nail his audition. Her nails bit into the breadth of his shoulders, and Jaime _growled_ into her ear.

But then reality struck. The front door opened, and Joanna's familiar chatter bubbled through. The open plan style of the house meant they could hear Joanna and Podrick, but they couldn't be seen. Not yet. Brienne pulled away, running a hand over creases in the shirt she wore. She risked a glance at Jaime, and noticed his short hair was at odd angles. _As if someone had had their hands in it._ Brienne resisted the urge to straighten him, fix him, touch him.

Instead she put on a neutral face, and turned her back. "Tyrion should be home soon. He's much better at this than I am."

She felt Jaime behind her, not quite touching her. "Don't. Don't do that, don't pretend—"

"That's all acting is, isn't it? Playing pretend." Brienne calmed her breathing, and hoped her cheeks weren't as flushed as they felt. "I should make sure Podrick is giving Joanna the right snack."

She felt the whisper of Jaime's hand around her wrist before he let her go. Putting on a happy smile, she descended down the staircase that would take her to the kitchen, where Joanna was already colouring. Podrick waved at her from the refrigerator, putting a plate of apple slices in front of their daughter. Only she wasn't _theirs_. They'd played house for five years, the four of them. But eventually Jaime would meet someone, someone who wasn't toxic, and he'd take his daughter and leave them. _Leave her._

It was best to stop pretending that Jaime cared for her, that he could love her, that they could be a family: best to do that now so it didn't hurt so much later. But as she watched Jaime walk over to join them, Brienne realised that, much like Arthur's, Brienne's heart would always be Jaime's. And, when that curtain fell, it would hurt like a sword straight through the heart.
Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!

If you have any suggestions for stories (including sequels) you'd like to see in this collection, feel free to prompt me in the comments, or at ddagent.tumblr.com :)
"And Now My Watch Begins" [Jaime is Brienne's sworn sword]

Chapter Summary

Sworn to Brienne's side, Jaime finds his vows challenged in more ways than one.

Chapter Notes

So, I really wanted to write something with Jaime as Brienne's sworn sword, because I think it would be good for him to serve someone honourable, and the change in their relationship was very interesting for me. I really, *really* want to write the vows scene described here at some point, too. I hope you enjoy!

This is the first story in the collection to not be a prompt; I am still accepting them, don't worry! Also: please note the rating change to this collection - this story is definitely NSFW.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tyrion was staring at him again. Like he had all through dinner, and all through drinks with Brienne and her father. Just like he had back in Winterfell, before and after the battle. In King's Landing, before and after their sister's trial. He stared, contemplating him; as if Jaime was the greatest mystery in all of Westeros. Then, after taking a sip of his wine, Tyrion simply said: "You're happy."

Jaime didn't need a moment to consider his answer. "Of course I am."

"You're happy. In Tarth."

"It's a beautiful island; I know you've only seen the inside of Evenfall Hall and its considerable wine cellar, but it is." The ocean was deep and blue; the sand warm underneath his feet. It had the bustling community of Lannisport, and the quiet of Winterfell. And, of course, it had Brienne of Tarth. "Is there somewhere else you think I should be? In King's Landing, perhaps, with your queen—"

"—our queen—"

"—who made it exceptionally clear she does not trust me within…fifty feet of the Red Keep, or in my previous position as Lord Commander, lest she fear history repeating itself?"

His brother stared again. Deep, inquisitive, and only slightly drunk. The Dragon Queen was a subject upon which they would never find common ground: as her Hand, Tyrion had found purpose. Having known her father, and seeing her in battle himself, Jaime would never trust her not to fall into the same ways. Their disagreement on such matters was why, a year and a half after their sister had been removed as Queen, Tyrion was only now making the journey from the capital to the Sapphire Isle.

"It's not that you're here, Jaime. Tarth is a fine island. The jewel of the Stormlands." His brother waved a hand dismissively, and Jaime felt affronted on behalf of the islanders. "It's just strange that,
considering how much you claimed to loathe the Kingsguard, you would find yourself in the exact same role."

Jaime laughed. And he kept laughing. He took a drink of his wine, making a mental note to share his brother's insight with Brienne tomorrow when they sparred. She'd certainly find it amusing, or perhaps she'd flush at the comparison of her as Queen. Either way, Jaime would be able to watch her face brighten and that would be worth this ridiculous turn in conversation. The exact same role. He'd spent too much time with Brienne, it seemed: he'd forgotten what it was like to have a lengthy conversation with someone who wasn't a knight.

"The vows I made to Brienne are entirely different than the ones I made to Aerys, or Robert, or even Cersei – although I was never in her Queensguard." Tyrion was staring again, trying to put the pieces of his brother shaped puzzle together. Jaime sat forward, wanting to share with his brother what it meant to make that oath. "I promised to shield her back, and keep her counsel. Give my life for hers, if it came to it."

"I see."

But he didn't. Jaime slumped backwards in his chair, glancing round his room at Evenfall Hall as if it would offer some inspiration. He'd made a promise to shield her back: he'd helped keep her safe from Baratheon bannermen who weren't thrilled with Robert's bastard as their liege lord, or that he had left Lord Selwyn in charge whilst he went exploring with Arya Stark. Jaime kept her counsel: many nights they talked about what was to come; he offered insight where he could and a ready sword when she just needed to let off steam. He would die for her, if necessary. But Jaime had known that long before he had made his vow.

"It's not just my vows, Tyrion." He stood up, pacing rather than shaking his brother until he understood. "Brienne made hers, too. She promised I would always have a place at her hearth."

Tyrion made a face. "And meat and mead at her table, I know."

"You're forgetting the last vow, Tyrion. I pledge to ask no service of you that might bring you dishonour."

Finally, finally, his brother understood. He finally knew why Jaime had left their sister's trial and execution to go walking in the city with Brienne, and returned sworn to her side. It had been her idea: you don't have to watch her die, Ser Jaime, she'd said. So they'd left, and they'd walked, and they'd found themselves in the dragon pit. Fuck loyalty, that's what Brienne had said when their sides had met at the parley. Fuck loyalty. No one: not Aerys, not Robert, not Cersei had deserved his loyalty, his honour, his trust. They had abused it, and him, and he would not serve another soul who wasn't deserving. But she was.

Joining him in the dust and ash, two hands gripping his face, Brienne had cried when she'd said the words. She knew how much they meant to him. He knew she'd never break that vow, as he would never break his.

"You're in love with her."

He didn't even try to deny it. "Yes. I am."

Jaime finally retook the seat in front of his brother. He thrust his goblet towards Tyrion; grateful that his pour was so liberal. Tyrion was smiling, now: women were a topic he could grasp quite readily. "I saw something between you two back at Winterfell, but with the war behind us and the war to come, I didn't feel it was right to say something."
"It's why I didn't, either." Despite the strength of his feelings for Brienne, he knew he couldn't share them. At the time, he believed his sister was carrying his child. Jaime wouldn't dishonour Brienne by involving her in that. "Not that she feels the same, anyway."

Tyrion laughed, the sound cutting through the still air, before his face fell. "Oh. You're not joking. You have seen the way she looks at you, haven't you?"

Jaime shrugged him off. "I'm her sworn sword and closest friend. She looks at me like she looks at Podrick, or the Queen in the North."

There was a time that Jaime had thought Brienne felt the same. A bubbling undercurrent in all their interactions, magnified by the yawning chasms of time between their moments together. Then, when he had ridden North, he had thought he'd seen something in her eyes. But time was cruel to memory, and what he had previously thought of as attraction was simply admiration. These days they shared jokes and stories and swordfights; they spent entire days together rather than the briefest of moments.

He fell more and more in love with her each day, and more and more he was grateful she did not share his love. She deserved much, much better than he. "It doesn't need to be requited, Tyrion. The love I have for Brienne isn't twisted, or dark. It's not based on lies and control. It's pure, and honest, and as long as she's happy, so am I."

"So you don't think about her when you touch your cock, then?"

*Finally, back to normal. "I'm a sworn sword, not a member of the Night's Watch."*

His brother laughed, poured some more wine, and their conversation shifted to those they had fought with during the Long Night. After a while Jaime switched to water, wanting to be alert for his early morning sparring session with Brienne. She was so smug when she beat him, and even happier those times when he pinned her to the ground. Her smile… Jaime was lost in thoughts of her, and it was only when his drunk of a brother fell out of his chair that the evening came to a close.

Thankfully, no one was around to see Ser Jaime, the sworn sword to the future Evenstar, haul the hand to the Queen of the Five Kingdoms to his room. Thankfully, no one witnessed the clammy hand Tyrion slapped against his face, or hear him loudly whisper *tell her, brother; one of us should die with a belly full of wine and a woman's mouth around his cock*. Jaime finally settled his brother into bed a few hours before dawn.

"I've missed you, little brother."

Wide awake despite the hour, Jaime decided to take a stroll around his relatively new home. Sometimes he snuck into the kitchens; other times when sleep eluded him he sparred in the yard. Tonight, his feet took him on the familiar path to Brienne's chambers - just to make sure she was alright. He secretly hoped she would be awake: they could talk about Tyrion's comments at dinner; Maester Eldon's dismissive remarks. It wouldn't be the first time they had stayed up till dawn talking.

But, as he approached, no candlelight spilled out from the gap underneath her door. "Fuck."

Still, Jaime lingered. He pressed his hand to the door, as if he could feel her warmth through the wood. One day, someday soon if Eldon got his way, Brienne would be married. Jaime would have to watch someone else exchange vows with Brienne; someone else would shield her back and keep her counsel. No doubt, Jaime would have to hear them fuck when he came to check upon her chambers. He'll have to be good enough, Jaime thought. If he's not - if he hurts her I'll cut him from groin to sternum. She should be treated like the Warrior: worshipped, beloved. If anyone hurts her—
That's when Jaime heard groaning behind the door, and he immediately reached for the hilt of his sword. It took a few seconds to brace his shoulder to burst into the room, but less than that to hear a breathless moan come from inside.

_Fuck. Was Brienne—_

He shouldn't listen. He should walk away, and go to sleep. _Perhaps there's someone in there with her_, his mind conjured as a reason to stay, and so he did. But as Jaime stood watch, he could hear no other sound than the rustle of bedsheets, and Brienne's moans as she fucked herself. She was loud whenever they sparred; grunting and cursing as she thrust and parried. It was no surprise that she was loud _here_, doing _that_. Her breathing was heavy, punctuated every now and again by a groan so deep that it shook Jaime to his core.

Then he heard: "Jaime."

His name was repeated several times; his name used alternately between _gods_ and singular moans that left him hard and pulsing against the front of his breeches. Jaime sought the cool surface of the door to rest his head and hand, lest the latter stray and grasp his aching cock. On the other side of the door, Brienne was still touching herself, thinking about _him_. His mind raced. Was she naked underneath those sheets? Soft material slipping over her long legs, bare breasts? Was she gripping the slats of her headboard whilst her fingers worked their way inside? Jaime closed his eyes as he pictured those fingers, calloused from years of battle, brushing her swollen clit.

She would be wet. _So wet_. All because of _him_.

He brushed his golden hand over the front of his breeches and felt a rush of pleasure. His left gripped the door handle. He could enter: stride in, join Brienne in her dishevelled sheets, and press his fingers to where she clearly wanted them to be. He could hear the bed _groan_, followed by a trio of utterances of his very name. _Go in there. Go in there and kiss her and touch her and make her yours_. _She is yours: you knighted her, gave her that sword. She belongs to you._

"Jaime, Gods—"

It was hard to argue when the knight he was sworn to was calling, _begging_ his name. But, despite what that little voice whispered to him, Brienne was not his. _I am hers_. If Brienne wanted him, desired some service of him, all she had to do was ask. Summon him to her bedchamber; brush her fingertips across his jaw: ask him to kiss her, fuck her, fall on his knees and worship at the altar between her thighs. He'd do so in a heartbeat, and had imagined such a scenario often when his control had slipped and he had touched himself to thoughts of her.

But Brienne would not ask of him something that might bring him dishonour. Ruining the maid of Tarth would be such a task; to say nothing of Brienne's insistence that she was still _Brienne the Beauty_, and not _Ser Brienne_, the most striking and admired Knight in the Seven Kingdoms. She probably thought he wouldn't want her.

"Brienne," he gasped, pressing his hand against his throbbing cock through layers of material. _He wanted her_. Had since she'd escorted him in chains, and slain three Stark men without so much as a second thought. He loved her, wanted her: he knew he didn't deserve her, would never claim her as his wife but _gods_ the knowledge that, even for a night, she wanted him, too, was more than he'd ever thought possible.

"J–Jai—"

Behind the door, Jaime heard the moment Brienne climaxed. He liked to imagine he could hear the
sound of her fingers working themselves in and out of her: he could certainly hear the fast rhythm of her breathing, and the painful gasp of his name. Then, silence. On this side of the door, Jaime felt his cock strain further against his breeches: it wanted to be touched, stroked, to feel the wet heat of Brienne's cunt as he fucked her, or she rode him. But he wouldn't stoop to touching himself in front of her chamber door, or returning to his chambers and thrusting into his hand. Nothing had changed: he still loved her, would serve her till his death or dismissal. She deserved better, and a masturbatory fantasy was all this was. Knights were not in the business of wants and needs. Both of them, more than most, understood the nature of duty.

So Jaime did the only thing he could: he strode from Brienne's rooms to the courtyard outside Evenfall Hall, and fell face-first into the freezing water of the horse trough.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!

If you have any suggestions for stories (including sequels) you'd like to see in this collection, feel free to prompt me in the comments, or at ddagent.tumblr.com :)
"Into the Fray" [Jaime is at the Twins when Arya strikes]

Chapter Summary

Walder Frey has called for a celebration. Jaime and Bronn join him at the Twins.

Chapter Notes

So, I was rewatching some scenes so I can write the oft-requested 'Catelyn tells her Uncle Tyrion about the pies' story, when I realised that Jaime was at the Twins when Arya was there preparing her murder party. So, a sucker for a good episode remix, I decided to write this.

Canon wise, everything is a bit muddy. It's the 701 scene, but has the energy of Jaime's scene in 610. Sansa and Jon are back at Winterfell, but Jaime and Bronn haven't returned to King's Landing. A certain blonde future knight is on Jaime's mind, but she does not appear in this story (she's mentioned a lot, though). Some dialogue is lifted straight from 701 because it's damn good, and why rewrite, y'know?

Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"To the Lannisters!"

A cheer went around the room; soldiers decked in red and gold raising their goblets. Jaime raised his, too; more out of habit than a need to celebrate. The men in this room were cheering the death of the Blackfish, the destruction of the Tully house, and Jaime's assistance in recapturing Riverrun for the Freys. The room was packed with Lannister soldiers and Frey sons. Old Walder kept court at the head table whilst Jaime and Bronn sat on his right. Laughter echoed off the walls; the room pungent with spilt wine and sweat.

He couldn't breathe.

Bronn dug his elbow into Jaime's side. "If you swoon, I won't catch you."

"I have no intention of swooning," Jaime hissed, reaching for his goblet. The wine was bitter. He pushed it away. "There are too many people in here; it's stifling."

"I'd certainly prefer to be in a fuckin' tent somewhere one-on-one with one of these girls." A serving girl was removing spent plates nearby, and Bronn smacked her on the arse, making her squeal. Jaime's glare did nothing to dissuade his poor behaviour. "Tell your face to fuck off. It's not my fault you let the good lady knight swan off into the sunset without givin' her a good seeing to."

"We don't have that kind of relationship."

"But I'd bet you'd like to. Have 'er pin you down; ride your golden cock." Bronn wiped his mouth
with the back of his hand. "The way she was looking at you back at Riverrun, she'd have sucked you dry if you'd only asked."

Jaime’s chair scraped across the stone floor as he stood abruptly from the table. All eyes turned towards him; Lord Lannister, the golden lion of Casterly Rock. Bronn just sniggered: he’d hit a nerve, they both knew it, and their journey back to King's Landing would be full of innuendo and off-colour comments regarding him and the Maid of Tarth. Not for the first time, Jaime wished he had other travelling companions. He wished for a boat, and oars pushing through dark water.

Walder Frey's voice cut through the vision of Brienne, and the solitary hand she waved in what was perhaps their last farewell. "We're not boring you, are we, Ser Jaime?"

"Not at all," he said, regaining his composure. "I just wanted a moment of fresh air."

"Surely not. I haven't even done my toast yet."

Old Walder clicked his fingers, and a handful of serving girls trotted into the room. They handed goblets to the Lannister soldiers at the back; the Frey sons and cousins to the sides. They placed them in front of Bronn and Jaime; Bronn eagerly grasping for his. Arbor Gold, apparently: certainly a step up from the horse piss they'd been drinking before. Although, having actually drunk horse piss whilst in the company of Locke and his men, Jaime thought the comparison was overly generous.

A goblet was raised to the assembled crowd. Walder Frey observed them all with a bitter smile.

"Stand together!"

"Stand together!"

His soldiers drank deeply; the Frey men drained their goblets. Beside him, Bronn practically inhaled his. Jaime reached for his own, but Walder fixed him with an unnerving stare. "I've got something better for you, Ser Jaime." Another click of his fingers and another goblet of wine was placed in his hand. He took a sip. If this was Arbor Gold, then someone had cheated Walder Frey. Gods help them.

Taking a reluctant seat, Jaime watched Frey address the assembled crowd. "Maybe…I'm not the most pleasant man. I'll admit it. But I'm proud of you lot. You're my family; the men who helped me slaughter the Starks at the Red Wedding. And the Lannisters, who sent their regards!"

A cold shadow passed over Jaime, as if the Stranger was standing at his back. The Lannisters send their regards. A glib comment to his former captor; a ringing endorsement for the men standing here. Brienne’s words from the tent at Riverrun came flooding back, and Jaime drained the rest of his special vintage. It could have been the finest wine in all of the Seven Kingdoms: all Jaime could taste was the blood at the back of his throat.

"Brave men, all of you," Walder Frey continued. "Butchered a woman pregnant with her babe. Cut the throat of a mother of five."

Lady Stark. He'd sworn an oath to her; had done all in his power to keep it. Not enough, not enough, not enough. Sansa was alive but Arya was long dead. Perhaps, perhaps, if he hadn't tried to escape then he would still have his hand, and they would have made it to King's Landing sooner, and Brienne could have taken her rightful place beside Catelyn Stark and saved her. Brienne hadn't cried when they'd been captured by Locke, or when they'd tried to force themselves upon her, or when they'd thrown her in with that bear. But she'd wept in his arms when they'd heard about the Red Wedding; another person she had failed to protect.
"I should cut you all down right here for making that woman weep."

But Jaime didn't. He kept his eyes down, and his hand on his goblet.

"—slaughtered your guests after inviting them into your home. But you didn't slaughter every one of the Starks."

**No, no, Brienne saved one.** There was now a Lady at Winterfell once again; they'd received the raven that very morning. Jaime had been pleased, privately, that Brienne's faith had been rewarded. But Walder's speech, apparently his plan for the future of his house, had Jaime concerned. *Did he mean to take the North?* Beside him, Bronn coughed. And kept coughing. The men in front of them began to splutter; clutch at their throats. The Lannister soldiers groaned, falling to their knees. Jaime turned to his right, and watched blood dribble from Bronn's open mouth.

"No, no, that was your mistake. You should have ripped them all out, root and stem. Leave one wolf alive and the sheep are never safe."

Jaime couldn't move. He just sat, and watched, as every single man in sight suffer the same fate. Goblets were pushed aside; blood joining wine on the table cloths. Lannister men in full colours collapsed and perished on the stone floor. Bronn was already dead. His open stare was unflinching; eyes bloodshot with the smell of wine still on his breath. *Wine*. The Arbor Gold to celebrate their victory. Feeling the blood return to his limbs, Jaime slowly turned his head to face Lord Walder Frey.

But it wasn't him. For a moment, Jaime thought Lyanna Stark herself had crawled out of her grave to seek revenge. But it was another dead girl come to take her vengeance. *Arya Stark.*

Arya turned to the servant girl on her left. "When people ask you what happened here, tell them the North remembers. Tell them winter came for House Frey."

The girl, barely holding in her fear, nodded and hurried quickly out of sight. So did the others; shell-shocked by the mass of bodies slumped in chairs and over tables. Then it was just Jaime, and Arya, and dozens of corpses reeking of wine and poison. He suddenly felt the prick of a blade along the underside of his jaw. The lion turned to the wolf. *Will you be the one to kill me?* Jaime thought. *Your father was too honourable; your brother never got the chance; your mother put her faith in me instead. What will you do?*

"Brienne of Tarth," Arya said eventually; the blade drawing a single pinprick of blood. "She said she swore an oath to my mother to bring me home."

Jaime gave a single nod. *"We both swore an oath when I left your brother's camp. I was to go to King's Landing; you and your sister were to leave with Brienne. But it was too late; you were missing; Sansa was——"* He glossed over her sister's marriage to his brother, and Jaime's stubborn refusal to help until the girl was already gone. "I sent Brienne out to find her, to keep Sansa safe."

"You armed her. And armoured her. She killed the Hound, you know. He had me, and they fought. I ran, but she fought for me, *for my mother.*" Arya's blade released its hold. "Brienne of Tarth. She is the reason you are still alive; the *only* reason. I want you to know that."

Arya slid her blade into a loop under her belt, hidden under her cloaks. She passed Jaime and made her way down the aisle of the hall, smiling over her handiwork. The men who had killed her family were dead. She had ripped House Frey out by the roots, like her brother had done to House Bolton. Winter had finally come to Westeros, and Jaime keeping his oath to Catelyn Stark was the only thing that would help him survive the cold. Even then, he had done little. It was all her.
He thought of Brienne, and what she would do now. "Where will you go, Arya?"

She paused before the door. "I still have names on my list."

Jaime feared for those names, but he did not ask after them. Didn't want to hear the name he knew was on there. "Why not go home?"

"The Freys took my mother. The Lannisters took my father. The Boltons took my home. There's nowhere to go."

"That's not true." Jaime pushed past the table, and joined Arya amidst the bodies of the dead. She stared at him, and Jaime waited for the wolf to pounce. When she didn't, he pushed on. "The Boltons are dead. There is a Stark at Winterfell: Brienne found your sister, she's home. Let me bring you home, Arya."

"I don't need your protection."

"Of course you don't." The bodies, the mask of skin atop the high table, were proof of that. "But I swore an oath to your mother to help bring you home. Despite what you've heard of me, there are some oaths it would kill me not to keep. This is one. Brienne has more than held up her end of our promise. Please, let me hold up mine."

"Why?"

Because I failed Myrcella. Because I was unable to save Tommen. Because, just for once, I want to be the knight I'd always hoped I'd be. "Please, Arya."

Her stare was as cold as a Northern winter; her chin raised high. But she agreed all the same. "Fine. I'll let you keep your oath, because Brienne tried in your stead as well as hers. But if you betray me —"

"—you'll kill me?"

Arya shook her head. "No. I'll kill Brienne, in your stead. You made a promise together; you tried to keep it together. If you break it, she'll pay your debt."

Silently, the pair walked past the pile of bodies towards the door. Men he'd drunk with, and fought with; Bronn's corpse rotting at the high table. Back in his tent at Riverrun, he had told Brienne he wouldn't betray his own house. But as he walked with Arya Stark – the shadow, the Stranger – Jaime realised he was doing just that. But some things went beyond loyalty. He had sworn to be brave. He had sworn to be just. He had sworn to protect the innocent.

Arya Stark was no longer innocent. These brave men had fallen just as easily as cowards. But this was just, and Jaime didn't look back.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!

If you have any suggestions for stories (including sequels) you'd like to see in this collection, feel free to prompt me in the comments, or at ddagent.tumblr.com :)
"Home" [Baby Swap/Role Reversal AU]

Chapter Summary

Brienne is a Lannister, and Jaime is from Tarth. Or are they? A baby swap/role reversal AU.

Chapter Notes

Anon prompted me: "Fic idea: brienne was born a lannister, jaime was born a tarth. brienne got put on the kingsguard for aerys' amusement, and then became the kingslayer, while jaime is known as the handsome knight of tarth."

My brain instantly went 'what if they were swapped at birth' and so that's what you've got, Anon. I'm not sure if it's any good, but I like Brienne's backstory and it's just nice to be writing after a really long, tiring week. I hope you enjoy...whatever this story is.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brienne had never been to Tarth before. For years, it had just been another island, like Estermont or the Arbor. That was, of course, until she had met Ser Jaime of Tarth: all golden hair and tanned skin; gilded green eyes and strong arms. She'd started thinking more and more of that island after their long journey to King's Landing, and even more so after their bitter parting. Brienne could recall the first time she'd glimpsed Jaime's island with her own eyes: she'd been on a ship to Dorne; ordered by her sister to retrieve her niece. She'd stood, and watched, and known.

She'd felt the island call to her. Now she was here, and it felt like home.

A cool sea breeze rustled the drapes by the window, and Brienne could taste salt on the air. She pulled the bed sheets closer around her, unused to the cool mornings. Jaime, however, was spread like a starfish across the bed with the plain white sheets pooled at his hips. Brienne's fingers twitched as she longed to trace the rivets of his spine; the scars that had come from his years as a knight. A mottled purple bruise stood out on Jaime's shoulder. For a moment, Brienne chastised herself for her actions the previous night. But then she recalled Jaime's groan as she'd buried her teeth in his shoulder; both overwhelmed with pleasure.

"This is a nice, peaceful island," Jaime murmured, his body curving as he stretched out the last vestiges of sleep. "Yet, all I can hear is the sound of you thinking."

"I'm not," Brienne scowled. It was quickly replaced by a blush as the sheets covering them both were kicked aside, and Brienne was witness to the hardening length of Jaime's cock. "If I was thinking, it was only about last night."

Jaime grinned, sliding his arms around her waist and pulling her atop him. "Fine, I'll accept that."

They both laughed; the sound quickly falling away as they continued their explorations of each other. This had been a long time coming. Brienne had first glimpsed Jaime's bare form back in
Harrenhal: they had been prisoners of Roose Bolton; both bloody and bruised and in need of a bath. She'd found him *glorious*; he had found her wanting (not *her*, but her actions, until she had admitted the truth). They'd kissed in King's Landing: wild hands and rough lips. Brienne would have happily led him to bed; years as the ugly lion informing her she would not get another chance. But Jaime — the honourable and handsome Sapphire Knight — had refused to do anything further. *Wait,* he'd said. *Wait until the world isn't falling down around us.* Four years later, many battles and scars since, and they could finally *enjoy* this.

Brienne was *certainly* enjoying it. Jaime's mouth against her breast; his hand heavy between her legs. It was easy to lose herself in him. Certainly easy to lose track of time. When the world had righted itself, Brienne noticed a piece of parchment folded and slipped underneath the door.

"Damn. I was supposed to meet my brother."

"He can wait." Jaime placed a kiss to her inner thigh. "We've been waiting *much* longer."

Brienne was inclined to agree. It was spring, and there was peace, and Jaime was nudging her legs apart once more… "No, I really must. He sounded quite insistent last night."

Jaime flopped back on the bed. *Fine. But come straight back.*

She promised with a kiss, and left Jaime's bed in order to dress. Her love watched her from the pillows, frowning like a petulant child with every button clasped and lace tied. The breeches and shirt she favoured were unbecoming of a Lannister, but as there were only two of them left now, it seemed a moot point to worry over appearances. Brienne finished dressing with *Oathkeeper* at her hip. It had been gifted to Jaime by Brienne's father: an enticement to marry Lord Tywin's ugly daughter. Her father hadn't realised that Jaime would have accepted her with or without the blade.

When Brienne had sent Jaime off to find Sansa Stark, she remaining in King's Landing to protect her brother, he had offered it to her instead. *It should be yours. Protect your family, then come and help me keep our oath to Lady Stark.* It should have been (*Jaime wasn't even a Lannister, after all*), she tried (*Tyrion sentenced to death; her niece and nephew both gone*), she did (*found him in Riverrun; he and Bronn hadn't killed each other yet*). The sword was hers, and he was hers, and Brienne was so happy sometimes she struggled for breath.

"I'll be back as soon as I can."

Jaime grinned. "You better, Lannister."

Brienne was shining brighter than the sun as she left the rooms of the future Evenstar, and went to meet her brother. She found Tyrion gazing up at one of the paintings occupying an entire stretch of wall. Brienne slowly approached, trying to gauge as to what was so urgent. Cersei was dead; killed by Arya Stark whilst the capital burned. Their father was dead; their nephews and niece, too. It was just the two of them. But then, they were used to that. The Giant and the Imp: the Monsters of Casterly Rock.

"Sorry to drag you away from your good knight," Tyrion said, although he didn't sound very sorry at all.

"I'll return soon enough." Her brother raised an eyebrow; his smirk fading into a genuine smile. Brienne couldn't stop her own from forming. "So why the urgency, brother? Is there something wrong? Is Cersei—"

"Still dead."
"Good."

She and Tyrion shared a knowing look. Perhaps other families would grieve at the death of their sister, of Brienne's twin sister. But she did not. Ever since they were children, Brienne had known that she was nothing like Cersei. They shared a womb, and a nameday, and that was all. Whilst other twins were mirrors, Brienne was Cersei's shadow: taller, broader, with pale hair and blue eyes.

Cersei had often mocked Brienne's appearance, when she wasn't doing her level best to get Brienne in trouble. It was her who'd told Father when Brienne had sparred with the local boys; Cersei who'd told the Prince when Brienne had secretly entered into a tournament. She'd laughed when Brienne had been invited to join the Kingsguard, and had told her this glorious appointment was nothing but a way to spite Father. Cersei had kept her close over the years so she could continue to torture and belittle her. Brienne's only respite was when Cersei had placed her attentions upon their brother instead.

As children, Tyrion had made up stories that they weren't Lannisters at all: they had just been left in lion cribs. One day the monsters would come back for their young, and they would have a real home and family. Casterly Rock had never felt like home with their father's looming presence. King's Landing had never felt like home with their sister's spiteful influence. But Tarth…_Tarth_ felt like home.

Brienne wanted to get back to the very big part of what made it so. "So what is it, brother?"

"Look at this painting with me."

Brienne resisted the urge to roll her eyes, and did in fact take in the large portrait in front of her. It was a woman; with long pale hair and eyes the colour of Tarth's waters. She was tall, with a broad jaw, and a serene expression. Brienne closed her eyes, as if perhaps they were deceiving her. But she opened them again, and found herself painted and hung in Evenfall Hall.

"Tyrion, who is this?"

"The former Lady of Tarth; Lord Selwyn's wife and Jaime's mother. You can see the resemblance, can't you?" She could. _Of course she could._ "Brienne, haven't you ever wondered why you don't look like other Lannisters?"

A thousand taunts from her sister echoed in her ears. Looks and whispers when she was introduced as _Brienne Lannister_ flickered through her mind. "A cruel joke by the Gods."

"But what if it wasn't? Brienne, dear sister, you looked _nothing_ like Cersei. Or myself, or our cousins. But you know who _does_? The future Evenstar of Tarth."

"Jaime looks nothing like Cersei."

_Oh, but those words rang hollow._ The first time she'd glimpsed him whilst sitting in a Stark cell, blue armour and steel sword, she had anticipated a multitude of barbs by someone who possessed such similar eyes to her beloved sister. He was golden, and tall, and at Joffrey's wedding most had assumed he was just another Lannister relative who had managed to secure an invitation. Of course he was nothing like the rest of them: Jaime Tarth was kind, and honourable, and quick witted without being cruel. He had fallen in love with the Kingslayer; Tywin Lannister's hulking maiden daughter. He had ignored the advances of Cersei where many men – including their own cousin – had failed.

"What are you saying, Tyrion?"
"I'm saying that there's a reason why Tarth feels like home, Brienne. You are home."

It didn't make any sense. "Tyrion, this is just wild speculation. Believe me; more nights than I can count have I wished I was not a Lannister. But I am, and we are, and we're the only ones left." Her eyes strayed to the portrait once more. "It's impossible!"

"Well, we'll quickly be able to find out. We just need the circumstances of Jaime's birth, and I know the circumstances of yours. Where's the— ah, there's Maester Eldon. Excuse me, we have a—"

Maester Eldon took one look at the Lannister siblings in front of the former Lady Tarth, and ran. Brienne watched, open-mouthed. "In my experience, dear brother, people with nothing to hide don't run."

"I agree. Now let's grab him; use those long legs for something!"

Brienne ran after Maester Eldon; Tyrion on her heels. They caught up with him in the great hall, where Brienne tackled him to the ground. He struggled, but her grip held true. Before Tyrion could interrogate the Maester, Lord Selwyn and Jaime entered the room. Seeing both of them standing side-by-side, Brienne realised how little of his father was in Jaime. Both, however, looked at Brienne and Tyrion like they'd gone mad.

"My lord, my lord!" Maester Eldon begged. "I have been a loyal servant for years."

Lord Selwyn looked at Brienne, and then at Jaime. Although he had not warmed to the remaining Lannisters in his home, he trusted his son's judgement. As he did now, when Jaime gave a single nod. "Just how loyal, Eldon?"

Then the whole story came out. How Tywin Lannister and Selwyn Tarth had both found themselves driven to reside in the same inn after a bout of horrendous weather. Selwyn's wife had gone into labour first, followed shortly by Brienne's mother, Joanna. It had been a difficult birth for both, with one ending up in the grave and the other near to it. With Lord Selwyn's wife dead, and his new-born a girl, Maester Eldon had taken it upon himself to provide his lord with a proper heir. Whilst the attendants fussed over Lady Lannister, Maester Eldon swapped the Tarth babe with the future heir to Casterly Rock.

Tywin Lannister left the inn with his wife, and two baby girls. Selwyn Tarth left with his son alone.

When the Maester had finished his story, a stunned silence held sway. Brienne stood, unsure and unsteady. She wasn't a Lannister. Never had been a Lannister. She was… a Tarth. Brienne of Tarth. Lord Selwyn – her father – was the first one to say something. He looked at Brienne: from the roots of her non-Lannister shade of blonde hair, to the boots much bigger than any Lannister woman had ever worn. Lord Selwyn made to touch her cheek, but dropped his arm by his side.

"You look just like your mother."

No one had ever said that before. She'd never had the looks of Joanna or the bearing of Tywin. She was too tall, too broad, too clumsy. No one other than Jaime had ever spoken of her with such reverence. Brienne – Brienne of Tarth – looked just like her mother. She had Lord Selwyn's build and his smile and without thinking Brienne collapsed against her father. Tywin had never hugged her. Selwyn clung on like she would be ripped from his arms if he let go.

In the middle of this tearful reunion, Jaime slipped away.

Brienne found him later outside Evenfall Hall, staring into the sea. She'd left Selwyn and Tyrion discussing this turn of events and what it meant for the legacy of both their houses. Brienne was
distinctly aware that she was now heir to these winding corridors, those painted portraits, the cool sea breeze. Jaime, her honourable Jaime, was heir to the Rock. He smiled when she approached, and a knot of tension Brienne had carried since discovering the truth began to loosen.

"I'm sorry for leaving; I wanted to be alone." Jaime shifted over, allowing Brienne to sit beside him on the rocks. "Growing up, it was just me and Father. No mother, no brothers and sisters. I always wanted a big family. I'd hoped, bringing you to Tarth, that I could. I brought you here to become my wife."

Brienne had suspected as much, but dared not say in case she was mistaken. Few men were as handsome as Jaime; few men as honourable. Every day she wondered what thing would take him away from her. That they had been swapped at birth seemed the likely end. She laced her fingers with his, needing to touch him. Jaime brought their clasped hands to his mouth for a single kiss. "Now, it seems I've lost more family. Parents I never knew; a sister who I would've been happy to have never met. Nephews, a niece, uncles and cousins. And my own father. I've lost Selwyn, too."

"You haven't lost him." She squeezed his hand. "He's still your father. He taught you how to fight and hunt; spent hours with you in the library working on your reading. You're his son, Jaime; he loves you."

"He does. But you look like my–your–mother, and I think he loves you even more." Jaime squared his shoulders. "It's a lot to take in. For you, too, I imagine: you're not a Lannister. Congratulations!"

"And you are. You poor, sorry bastard."

Beside her, Jaime laughed. "I think I'll stick with Tarth, for now. When we wed, you should take it, too. Be Brienne of Tarth; it suits you."

"You still—you still want to be wed?"

Jaime leaned over and pressed his lips to hers in way of an answer. "I'm still me; you're still you. I am yours, and you are mine. Although, now that it turns out I am a Lannister, I think that sword—"

"—it was a gift."

They wrestled lightly for a moment, Jaime's hands grazing along sensitive spots, before she wrapped both arms around his shoulders and claimed his mouth. One day she would have faith in Jaime's affections; one day she would stop thinking of herself as one of the monsters of Casterly Rock. Perhaps, now she knew her blood lay in the Stormlands, that day would come sooner.

As Jaime pulled away, he wrapped an arm around Brienne's waist and pulled her into his side. His lips pressed to her temple. "At least you know why you feel so at home here. You are home."

"Family or no: you're here. That's all I need."

Together, the two of them settled in to watch the tide break as dusk settled over their island.

Chapter End Notes

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