

# Smeg

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## *Smeg*

Gorm stood over the young man bleeding in the snow. His left knee was severed from behind, caught by Gorm's axe. Still he held his sword up in a guard.

Blood flowed readily from Gorm's broken nose painting his moustache and mouth red. He gripped his axe and shield, still raised.

The boy couldn't have been older than eighteen. Fear gripped his eyes, his breath puffed out in clouds quickly like he was trying to make a seat for God to watch over him. Gorm had gotten his head too.

They were fighting conscripts from Germany, a contingent of peasants.

Gorm stood tall over the boy.

Did he have a farm back home? A girl from his village he left? Was he the apprentice of a smith? Did he replace a father who'd worked to get him into the craft? Before the battle did he go to confession just like he?

His shoulders slumped forward. He took a deep breath.

What right did he have to kill this boy? Did God want him to slay a scared child in the snow? They'd never offered a chance for their opponents to surrender, what right? The boy never got a chance to run or negotiate with his enemies.

He let his arms drop to his side, the boy lowered his sword. Gorm looked to the sky.

He was tired. He looked back down, the boy's sword was still lowered. Why did he have to die? Was it in the law to kill the righteous and the innocent? Gorm wanted nothing more than to defend the boy, his heart turned against the mercenary captain in defiance.

A look of betrayal and pleading gripped the boy's face again as Gorm raised his axe. He pleaded with God for mercy as the axe came crashing through the young man's skull. The snow was so cold.