

= Lord Snow =

" Lord Snow " is the third episode of the HBO medieval fantasy television series Game of Thrones . It first aired on May 1 , 2011 . It was written by the show creators David Benioff and D. B. Weiss , and directed by series regular Brian Kirk . Critical reception was generally positive , and viewership was up 10 % from the first two episodes of the series .

The plot follows Jon Snow 's training at The Wall ; Eddard 's arrival at King 's Landing , followed by Catelyn , looking for Bran 's would @-@ be murderer ; Arya reveals her desire to learn sword fighting to her father ; Joffrey is given a lesson in ruling the Kingdom by Cersei , and Robert longs for the glory of his past . Meanwhile , Daenerys learns she is pregnant . The episode was the first to feature Old Nan , played by Margaret John , who died before the series was broadcast ; the episode is dedicated to her memory in the final credit .

= = Plot = =

= = = In the Dothraki Sea = = =

Daenerys ( Emilia Clarke ) is beginning to gain confidence in her new role as Drogo 's wife and gains the respect of the exiled knight Ser Jorah Mormont ( Iain Glen ) , but her relationship with her brother Viserys ( Harry Lloyd ) becomes strained when he angrily assaults her under the assumption that she is giving him commands . As punishment , Viserys is choked and nearly killed by Daenerys 's bloodrider Rakharo ( Elyes Gabel ) and is forced to walk back to camp after Daenerys intervenes to spare his life .

Irri ( Amrita Acharia ) notices that Daenerys is pregnant and shares the news with Jorah and Rakharo . Rather than be pleased , Jorah mysteriously departs for the Free City of Qohor for supplies . In their tent , Daenerys reveals to Drogo ( Jason Momoa ) that their child is a boy .

= = = In Winterfell = = =

With Bran ( Isaac Hempstead @-@ Wright ) now awake , Old Nan ( Margaret John ) tells him a tale of a long @-@ ago endless winter , when the White Walkers first appeared riding their dead horses and raising Wights from the men they slaughtered . Her story is interrupted by Robb ( Richard Madden ) who sadly confirms to Bran that his injuries are permanent , and he 'll never walk again . Bran , saying he is unable to remember anything about his fall , wishes he were dead .

= = = At the Wall = = =

Jon has joined the other recruits under the firm hand of Ser Alliser Thorne ( Owen Teale ) and easily beats every opponent sent against him . Ser Alliser berates them all for their poor performance , but has no kind words for Jon , dubbing him " Lord Snow " to mock his bastard heritage and telling him that he 's " the least useless person here . " Disheartened , Jon asks Benjen ( Joseph Mawle ) to take him in a several @-@ month @-@ long ranging north of the Wall , but his uncle blocks this , telling Jon that " here , a man gets what he earns when he earns it . "

Tyrion ( Peter Dinklage ) tells Jon that he isn 't " better " than any of his new " brothers , " but only more fortunate , as he was trained by a master @-@ at @-@ arms , while the others are all orphan boys or criminals who have likely never held a sword before today . To make amends , Jon decides to give his fellow recruits proper sword training . Later , Tyrion is beseeched by Lord Commander Jeor Mormont ( James Cosmo ) and the elderly , blind Maester Aemon ( Peter Vaughan ) to ask his sister and brother @-@ in @-@ law for more men for the Night 's Watch , as the wildlings are massing in numbers greater than the Watch is able to deal with , and rumours that the White Walkers have returned are becoming more widespread . Tyrion is skeptical , but agrees to do so . Before leaving the Wall , Tyrion fulfills his ambition to urinate off the top of the Wall and says

goodbye to Jon , who finally accepts Tyrion as a friend .

== In King 's Landing ==

Eddard 's party arrives at King 's Landing . Eddard ( Sean Bean ) is immediately summoned to a meeting of the king 's Small Council . On his way through the throne room , Eddard encounters Jaime Lannister ( Nikolaj Coster @-@ Waldau ) , and the audience is told that Jaime killed the Mad King Aerys Targaryen , the father of Daenerys and Viserys Targaryen . Jaime reminds Eddard that Aerys had murdered Eddard 's father and brother ; however , Eddard does not consider this grounds for Jaime to break his oath as a knight of the Kingsguard .

Eddard joins the Small Council , consisting of the king 's brother , Lord Renly ( Gethin Anthony ) , the eunuch Lord Varys ( Conleth Hill ) , Grand Maester Pycelle ( Julian Glover ) and the Master of Coin Lord Petyr " Littlefinger " Baelish ( Aidan Gillen ) . Littlefinger had once dueled Eddard 's brother for Catelyn 's hand in marriage and implies that he is still in love with her . Renly announces that Robert plans to hold a great tourney in honor of Eddard 's appointment as the Hand of the King . Eddard learns that the crown is heavily indebted , primarily to the queen 's father , Lord Tywin Lannister .

Catelyn arrives in King 's Landing , supposedly in secret . However , she is taken by a pair of city watchmen to a brothel owned by Littlefinger . He meets her to tell her that he had her brought there to keep her safe and hidden . Varys , also present , reveals that he learned of Catelyn 's arrival through his spies . The three of them and Ser Rodrik ( Ron Donachie ) discuss the attempted murder of Bran . Littlefinger shocks them all by admitting that the assassin 's dagger was once his own . He claims that he lost it to Tyrion Lannister , betting on Jaime Lannister to win a previous tourney . Littlefinger arranges a meeting between Eddard and Catelyn , and Lord Stark reluctantly takes on Littlefinger as an ally who will help them find Bran 's assailant .

Eddard returns to his keep , only to find his daughters arguing . Arya ( Maisie Williams ) is furious at Sansa ( Sophie Turner ) for lying to protect Joffrey Baratheon . Ned reminds her that Joffrey is a prince and will be king one day with Sansa as his wife . Learning that his younger daughter aspires to be a swordsman and has a sword of her own , he hires the Braavosi " water dancer " ( fencer ) Syrio Forel ( Miltos Yerolemou ) to teach her the art of swordsmanship .

== Production ==

== Writing ==

" Lord Snow " was written by the show creators and executive producers David Benioff and D. B. Weiss , based on the original book by George R. R. Martin , chapters Eddard IV , Arya II , Bran IV , Catelyn IV , Jon III , Tyrion III , and Daenerys IV .

== Casting ==

The third episode introduces a number of new characters to the story , due to the expansion of the story to the new locales of King 's Landing and the Wall .

In the capital city the members of the council are presented . Series regular Aidan Gillen , known for his roles in *Queer as Folk* and *The Wire* takes the role of Lord Petyr Baelish , the king 's master of coin known as " Littlefinger " . Gethin Anthony plays the king 's youngest brother Renly Baratheon , and veteran actor Julian Glover , well known to science fiction and fantasy fans after appearing in films such as *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* , was cast as Grand Maester Pycelle after actor Roy Dotrice had to be replaced for medical reasons . Author George R. R. Martin wrote on the casting of Conleth Hill as spymaster Varys : " Hill , like Varys , is quite a chameleon , an actor who truly disappears inside the characters he portrays , more than capable not only of bringing the slimy , simpering eunuch to life . " Ian McElhinney plays Ser

Barristan Selmy , the commander of the Kingsguard , and Miltos Yorelemou appears as the fencing instructor Syrio Forel . McElhinney had previously played Gillen 's father in *Queer as Folk* .

The hierarchy of the Wall is introduced with James Cosmo as commander Jeor Mormont , Peter Vaughan as the blind maester Aemon , Owen Teale as the trainer of the new recruits Ser Alliser Thorne , and Francis Magee as the recruiter Yoren .

This episode also marks the first appearance of the Welsh actress Margaret John as Old Nan . 84 @-@ year @-@ old Margaret John died on 2 February 2011 , a few months after having finished recording her scenes in *Game of Thrones* , which was her last role on television . With a 50 @-@ year acting career , she is remembered for her role of Doris on the BBC television show *Gavin and Stacy* . Executive producers David Benioff and Dan Weiss issued a statement grieving her death . The episode " Lord Snow " is dedicated to her , with the last credit being " In the memory of Margaret John . "

== = Filming locations == =

To film the scenes at the Wall the production built a set on the abandoned quarry of Magheramorne , a few minutes north of Belfast . The composite set ( with both exteriors and interiors ) consisted of a large section of Castle Black including the courtyard , the ravenry , the mess hall and the barracks , and used the stone wall of the quarry as the basis for the ice wall that protects Westeros from the dangers that dwell beyond . They also made a real elevator to lift the rangers to the top of the Wall .

For the streets of King 's Landing , the production flew to Malta . The gate of Fort Ricasoli doubled as the The King 's Gate , shown at the beginning of the episode when the royal entourage enters the city . The entrance of the Red Keep used when Catelyn and Rodrik enter the fortification corresponds to Mdina Gate , and also in Mdina the Pjazza Mesquita is the location for the entrance to the brothel owned by Lord Baelish .

Ron Donachie , the actor playing Ser Rodrik Cassel , said that the scene where he entered King 's Landing was his favourite moment . Visiting a museum in the Maltese capital of Valletta , Donachie had seen a painting of armed knights riding through that Gate of Mdina itself and found exciting that to be able to do the same thing , " especially in Rodrik ? s full @-@ scale Stark battle regalia " .

== = Other == =

On the scene where Old Nan offers to tell Bran stories , she claims that his favorites are the ones about Ser Duncan the Tall . The tales of Duncan and his squire Egg are a series of novellas written by author George R. R. Martin , taking place about a hundred years before the events of *Game of Thrones* .

== = Reception == =

== = Ratings == =

" Lord Snow " ' s first airing was seen by 2 @.@ 4 million viewers , which represented a 10 % increase in the ratings from the two previous episodes . Combined with the second airing it reached 3 @.@ 1 million viewers , which were considered good results especially considering that the news of Osama Bin Laden 's death broke during the West Coast airing of the episode .

In the UK , the viewership figures were in line with those obtained on the previous week , with around 510 @,@ 000 viewers . Those figures are in the top end for the network , Sky Atlantic .

== = Critical response == =

While the majority of the critics gave " Lord Snow " a positive review , many suggested that it suffered from having to introduce many new characters and locations . Review aggregator Rotten

Tomatoes surveyed 10 reviews of the episode and judged 80 % of them to be positive . The website 's critical consensus reads , " ' Lord Snow ' is an intriguing and heavy transitional episode with standout performances from Bean and Gillen , though it would be better served with more focus on character change and development . " Myles McNutt wrote at Cultural Learnings that it was " perhaps the most narratively uninteresting episode of the first six , " although he highlighted that it was " hardly a bad episode of television , filled as it is with satisfying sequences that capture many themes key to the series , " and added that many issues introduced in this episode had a payoff in future installments . Entertainment Weekly 's James Hibberd also thought that it was his least favorite episode of the first six , due to too much character development . However , Alan Sepinwall from HitFix , liked the " more rambling quality of ' Lord Snow , ' " and while admitting it is heavy on exposition he felt it worked " because the stories are being told with such passion . " IGN 's Matt Fowler wrote that " Lord Snow " was " dense and filled with tons of exposition and backstory , which may or may not have interested those new to this story - but I found myself hanging on every precious word . " Alan Sepinwall wrote a positive review of the episode for HitFix , saying " Arya 's fencing lesson is a wonderful scene , carried by the joy of Maisie Williams ' performance and the playful , Inigo Montoya @-@ ish quality of her new teacher Syrio , but it 's also such a small , simple thing that you wouldn 't ordinarily expect it to be the note that an episode of dramatic television goes out on " and continued " I liked the looser , more rambling quality of " Lord Snow , " an episode largely about transitions , fish out of water , and old ghosts .

Some of the scenes were highly praised by reviewers . The closing scene with Arya taking her first lesson from the Braavosi Syrio Forel was highlighted . Maureen Ryan from AOL TV stated that it was her favorite scene of the series so far , and James Hibberd remarked upon the quality of all the child actors of the show and stated that Maisie Williams owned her role in this episode . Other scenes that were noted by the critics were the father @-@ daughter dialogue with Eddard Stark and Arya , King Robert remembering with the members of his Kingsguard their first killings , and Eddard attending his first session of the Small Council .