

= A Change Is Gonna Come (Grey 's Anatomy) =

" A Change Is Gonna Come " is the fourth season premiere of the American television medical drama Grey 's Anatomy , and the 62nd episode of the overall series . The premiere focused on the aftermath of the main characters ' promotion to residency , following the conclusion of their internship . The episode was the first not to feature Isaiah Washington , portraying Preston Burke , due to his being fired from the series at the conclusion of the third season . The installment marked Chyler Leigh 's promotion to series regular status , following her guest appearances in the last two episodes of the previous season . Also featured were one @-@ time guest actors Mark Pellegrino , Stephanie Childers , Sandra Thigpen , and Steven Porter .

The story arcs which provided a particular focus on individual characters include Cristina Yang (Sandra Oh) dealing with the aftermath of Burke 's (Washington) departure , and the dissolution of their engagement , Izzie Stevens , (Katherine Heigl) struggling with her romantic feelings towards the married George O 'Malley (T.R. Knight) , and Callie Torres (Sara Ramirez) learning to deal with her new position of Chief Resident . Also dealt with was Alex Karev (Justin Chambers) coping with Rebecca Pope 's (Elizabeth Reaser) departure , and Meredith Grey (Ellen Pompeo) facing the conclusion of her relationship with Derek Shepherd (Patrick Dempsey) , while dealing with the arrival of her half @-@ sister , Lexie Grey (Leigh) , who enrolls in the surgical program at the hospital .

The script for the premiere was written by series creator Shonda Rhimes , while Rob Corn served as the director . The episode aired on September 27 , 2007 in the United States on the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) , with an approximated 20 @.@ 93 million viewers tuning in . Ranking second in the time @-@ slot and third for the week , the episode garnered a 7 @.@ 3 Nielsen rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , seeing a decrease from the previous episode , which received an 8 @.@ 0 rating . Critical response of the episode ranged from mixed to negative , with Yang 's storyline being a particular source of critical acclaim from television reviewers . Although the episode was fictionally set in Seattle , Washington , filming occurred in Los Angeles , California .

= = Plot = =

" A Change Is Gonna Come " opens to a voice @-@ over narrative from Meredith Grey (Ellen Pompeo) about change , the episode 's main theme . Following the conclusion of their internship , Meredith , along with her colleagues , Cristina Yang (Sandra Oh) , Izzie Stevens (Katherine Heigl) , and Alex Karev (Justin Chambers) commence their residency in the department of surgery , and start dealing with new responsibilities , including the new generation of interns , to whom they have been assigned as mentors . After failing his post @-@ internship exam in the season three finale , George O 'Malley (T.R. Knight) must repeat his internship , in order to avoid being forced to leave the medical field . It is revealed that among the new interns is Lexie Grey (Chyler Leigh) , Meredith 's half @-@ sister , who previously had an encounter with Derek Shepherd (Patrick Dempsey) , despite his unawareness of her identity . Callie Torres (Sara Ramirez) , whom Richard Webber (James Pickens , Jr .) chose for Miranda Bailey 's (Chandra Wilson) righteous position of Chief Resident , finds difficulty in exposing an authoritative behavior , getting no respect from her subordinates .

It is explained that , in the aftermath of her being left by Preston Burke (Isaiah Washington) at the altar , Yang spent her honeymoon travelling with Meredith . Having just returned , she is shocked to learn that Burke has resigned from Seattle Grace , and relocated to an unknown location . Stevens has to deal with her romantic feelings for O 'Malley , whose marriage to Torres is being threatened by his yet to be exposed affair . O 'Malley , who finds himself in the unpleasant situation of repeating his internship , quickly gains support in Lexie , who decides not to tell the fellow interns about his failed exam . Karev is revealed to have visited Rebecca Pope (Elizabeth Reaser) , following her departure . In the absence of Addison Montgomery (Kate Walsh) , who relocated to Los Angeles , California , Mark Sloan (Eric Dane) seeks reconciliation with Shepherd , formerly his closest friend and confidant . Initially unwilling to resume his friendship with Sloan , Shepherd ultimately gives him

a second chance . Bailey manifests a cold attitude towards Webber , in order to express her disappointment in not being considered for the position of Chief Resident , in spite of her enviable reputation among the hospital staff . Lexie meets Meredith for the first time , but is demoralized when she becomes aware of her apparent discomfort . Meredith and Shepherd encounter difficulty in being broken up , realizing that their mutual romantic feelings are an impediment in their attempt at having separate lives .

The emergency room is filled with victims from a chain car accident , one of whom is admitted in the department of neurosurgery , under the care of Shepherd and Yang . As the physicians soon discover that he has been internally decapitated , they come to the conclusion that even a minor move would result in irreparable damage . A pregnant woman is admitted in plastic surgery , after having her arm severed . Meredith is assigned to work for Sloan during the day , and is immediately told to find the arm , much to the fascination of her interns . Despite trying to deal with her trainees in a strict manner , Stevens is looked upon as unprofessional by the interns she was assigned to . Her image is further deteriorated when she decides to abandon her hospital duties , in order to perform surgery on a deer , once again letting her emotional involvement interfere with her career . Meredith and Shepherd discuss the repercussions of their breakup , and realize that they cannot reconcile . However , the two engage in sexual intercourse , as a manner to express their mutual feelings for the last time . O 'Malley comes to the realization of his love for Stevens , and quickly discloses to her that he shares her romantic feelings .

= = Production = =

" A Change Is Gonna Come " was written by series creator and executive producer Shonda Rhimes , whereas filmmaker and series veteran Rob Corn served as the director . The soundtrack used in the episode included Mat Kearney 's " Breathe In , Breathe Out " , I 'm from Barcelona 's " Oversleeping " , Meiko 's " Reasons to Love You " and Cinematic Orchestra 's " To Build A Home " . Also featured in the episode was " Knock ' Em Out " , the second track from British pop singer @-@ songwriter Lily Allen 's debut album , Alright , Still . Several one @-@ time guest stars appeared in the episode , including Mark Pellegrino , who played Chris , Stephania Childers , portraying Nancy Walters , Sandra Thigpen in the role of Clara , and Steven Porter , who acted as Joey . Although fictionally set in Seattle , Washington , filming primarily occurred in Los Angeles , California . Scenes in the operating room were filmed at the Prospect Studios in Los Feliz , Los Angeles .

The fourth season premiere saw Leigh 's first appearance as a main cast member . Leigh first appeared on the show during the last two episodes of the third season as Meredith 's half @-@ sister , Lexie . Following Washington 's departure , it was reported that show 's executives were planning on adding new cast members , such as Lexie . She was officially upgraded to a series ' regular on July 11 , 2007 , for the fourth season . On casting Leigh as Lexie , Grey 's Anatomy creator Shonda Rhimes stated , " We met with a lot of young actresses , but Chyler stood out . She had a quality that felt right and real to me . It felt like she could be Meredith 's sister , but she had a depth that was very interesting . " Leigh offered her insight on her first days working with the main cast of the series , " It was like coming into somebody else 's group or circle . It was a little daunting in the beginning . But I have had such a great time . " " A Change Is Gonna Come " was the first episode in two years not to feature the character of Montgomery , due to her portrayer , Walsh , leaving the series in order to launch the Grey 's Anatomy spin @-@ off , medical drama Private Practice . However , the character continued to be prominent throughout the run of the series , appearing sporadically as a guest star in the following seasons . Also introduced in " A Change Is Gonna Come " is the new generation of interns , all of whom were portrayed in co @-@ star capacity , with the exception of Lexie .

" A Change Is Gonna Come " was the first episode not to feature Washington 's character , Burke . Washington was officially fired from the series , following an on @-@ set incident with Knight and Dempsey , which had been in the media attention since the commencement of the production for the third season . News reports surfaced that Washington had insulted co @-@ star Knight with a homophobic slur . Following the exposure of the argument , Knight publicly disclosed his

homosexuality , which led to Washington 's issuing an apology statement , regarding his inappropriate use of words during the incident . The controversy later resurfaced when the cast appeared at the 65th Golden Globe Awards ceremony , which saw Washington ridiculing homosexuality during an interview , following the statement that denied the occurrence of an on @-@ set incident . After being rebuked by his studio , Touchstone Television , Washington publicly apologized at length for using the epithet in reference to Knight . An issue of People disclosed Washington 's presence at executive counseling , which led to an undetermined hiatus of his contract . After " Didn 't We Almost Have It All ? " , the last episode Washington appeared in , was filmed , the network decided not to give Washington the possibility of a renewal . In a statement released by his publicist , Washington assented , " I 'm mad as hell and I 'm not going to take it anymore " . In another report , Washington stated he was planning to spend the summer pursuing charity work in Sierra Leone , while working on an independent film . In a subsequent interview , Washington highlighted the unfairness in his being let go from the series , considering filing a lawsuit as a result . He also accused Knight of using the controversy to bolster his own career and increase his salary on the series . Following his firing , Washington began asserting that racism within the broadcasting media was a primary factor in his dismissal from the series , which drew a critical perspective from Rhimes . During his appearance on Larry King Live , Washington once again denied using a homophobic epithet in reference to Knight .

While writing the episode , Rhimes put an emphasis on the character of O 'Malley , detailing his relationships with both Stevens and Torres . On the topic , Rhimes elaborated , " The interns are residents now , with interns of their own . Except for George , poor George , who is stuck repeating his intern year . It 's not easy being a repeater . He 's the only who hasn 't gone through any change when we begin the episode . But by the end , he has . He tells Izzie that he loves her too . Which takes guts . Because he knows what he is getting into . He 's a married man with a great wife , and he never intended to be a married man who loved another woman . " Regarding Meredith 's story arc , Rhimes felt that she cannot deal with all that is expected of her in her relationship with Shepherd , choosing their genuine love as the greatest obstacle in their decision to break up . Writing for Yang 's storyline , Rhimes focused on her unsuccessful attempts at moving on , exposing her devastation at the realization of Burke 's departure , which would be the main seasonal storyline for the character . The episode also deals with Sloan and Shepherd 's path to reconciliation . Rhimes disclosed that the concept for the plot point was to have the two characters go back to being friends , as a result of Montgomery 's departure . Rhimes offered her insight on Lexie 's arrival , " Lexie Grey is here now . And she 's here to stay . I love that she 's a bit of a dork . Being a dork myself , I am fond of the girls with verbal diarrhea . Because it 's not easy to keep all your words in , believe me . " Regarding Webber and Bailey 's storyline , Rhimes noted that the latter 's intentions are not to let the former " off the hook " for choosing Torres over her for the position of Chief Resident , which was rightfully hers . Rhimes highlighted the unfairness in Webber 's choice , noting his unusual manner of comprehending the situation . " She 's Bailey . She 's worked hard , she 's been the best . And isn 't it just like the Chief to decide what is best for her ? It 's his flaw , the Chief . He 's an old school man and like an old school man , he 's taking care of his women . Whether they like it or not . This isn 't gonna be an easy pill for Bailey to swallow . "

= = Reception = =

" A Change Is Gonna Come " was originally broadcast in the United States on September 27 , 2007 , airing on the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) in its regular 9 : 00 Eastern time @-@ slot . Viewed by a total of 20 @.@ 93 million viewers , the episode is the series ' second most @-@ watched season premiere , just behind the third season opener , which had been watched live by 25 @.@ 41 million American viewers . In comparison to the previous episode , which was watched by 22 @.@ 57 million viewers , " A Change Is Gonna Come " made a 21 % decrease in terms of viewership . However , the viewership of the episode ranked second in both its time @-@ slot and the entire night , being beaten out by its airtime rival , CSI : Crime Scene Investigation on CBS , which was watched by 25 @.@ 22 million viewers . In the entire week , the episode ranked third ,

being beaten out by both CSI and fellow ABC show Dancing With the Stars . In addition to being a success in viewership , the episode also did well in ratings . " A Change Is Gonna Come " garnered a 7 @. @ 3 Nielsen rating in household viewership , ranking second in its time @- @ slot , and third for the week .

The premiere generally received mixed to negative feedback from television critics . Debbie Chang on BuddyTV deemed the episode " dysfunctional and ridiculous " , being particularly critical of the story arc involving Stevens , whom she described as not being worthy of being promoted to the residency level . Chang expressed disagreement with the manner Bailey and Shepherd 's characters were dealt with by the writers , feeling that the former 's anger should have been targeted at herself , and criticizing the exaggerated exposure of the latter 's " first grader emotional maturity " . However , Yang 's character was praised , with Chang choosing her manner of repressing her feelings as a highlight . Chang expressed a general disappointment in the episode , disapproving the choice for the episode as a season opener , a topic in regard to which she elaborated , " I can see already that this season will continue to bring us medical cases that are so blatantly about the doctors ' pathetic lives . " In September 2009 , the inclusion of the deer ranked twelfth in Entertainment Weekly 's " Most Memorable Cases of Grey 's Anatomy " .

Eileen Lulevitch , entertainment reviewer for TV Guide , was generally favorable of the episode , writing , " Watching the season premiere tonight was like welcoming an old friend back into your home . It was so easy to slip back into Grey 's world and get caught up in all of the amazing moments that make this show so much fun to watch . And while I expected the night to start off on a somber note , by addressing Cristina and Burke 's fallout , I was pleasantly surprised by the way the attendees paid tribute to Bailey , by giving their new interns the same exact first @- @ day speech Bailey had given them . " Lulevitch praised Meredith 's story arc , noting the surprising turn her character evolution has taken , as she praised Lexie 's introduction . While expressing a negative perspective on the writers ' decision to have Torres be the Chief Resident , instead of Bailey , Lulevitch described Torres ' adjustment to her new position as one of the episode 's focal points . Despite praising Yang 's storyline in the personal background , the concept of her interaction with the patient she was assigned to was regarded as predictable and obvious , " When the man 's family came to see him , and Cristina told them it could be for the very last time . It was that moment that really got Cristina thinking about how much she did in fact miss Burke , as we later learned in the episode . " Writing for IGN , Laura Burrows was favorable of the episode . Regarding the storylines developed in " A Change Is Gonna Come " , Burrows elaborated , " The season opener was promising in that it had the interns in a new role and introduced a new side of George . As all of his friends progressed from interns to residents , George was forced to re @- @ sit his internship . This created new drama and also opened up the hospital to a whole new set of interns rife with their own set of emotional baggage and drama . There were a series of interesting and new plots . "

Heigl , who portrayed Stevens , was particularly critical of her character 's relationship with O 'Malley , deeming it " a ratings ploy " . Heigl further explained her outlook on the progression of her character , " They really hurt somebody , and they didn 't seem to be taking a lot of responsibility for it . I have a really hard time with that kind of thing . I 'm maybe a little too black and white about it . I don 't really know Izzie very well right now . " Former The Star @- @ Ledger columnist Alan Sepinwall expressed a negative perspective on the episode , deeming it childish and ridiculous . He disliked Rhimes ' conception of the story arc involving Stevens , elaborating , " If there 's a doctor on this show who should be forced to repeat their intern year , if only to prevent them from being allowed to influence younger doctors , it 's Izzie , not George . She proves her unfitness for this role with her first patient of the day , the deer . Not cute , not character @- @ illuminating , just dumb . " Also criticized was Torres , whose regression from a " cool , rocking , outgoing , confident and full of life " role was highlighted , receiving negative feedback from Sepinwall , who wrote " Now the character exists entirely so the writers can dump on her , in a devolution far worse than anything . I just don 't get it , and it pains me to watch any scene with Callie in it . Despite expressing a negative outlook on Meredith 's story arc which dealt with Shepherd , noting that the " constant break @- @ ups and reunions are as silly as if Shonda Rhimes had just kept them apart for three seasons before letting them kiss " , Sepinwall was favorable of Lexie 's arrival at Seattle Grace , feeling that " she 's

still being written as Meredith circa season one in an attempt to make us like her , but I didn 't mind the manipulation , if only because there are so few characters left on this show to like . " The Buzzsugar television reviewer was mainly critical of the episode , describing it as a departure from " the old show " . However , Lexie 's introduction was praised in the Buzzsugar review .