

= The Pointy End =

" The Pointy End " is the eighth episode of the HBO medieval fantasy television series Game of Thrones . First aired on June 5 , 2011 , the episode was directed by Daniel Minahan and written by George R. R. Martin , the author of the A Song of Ice and Fire novels on which the show is based .

The plot covers the aftermath of Eddard Stark 's capture . While the Lannisters seek to capture his daughters , his son and heir , Robb , raises an army in the North . Meanwhile , Daenerys witnesses a Dothraki raid on a peaceful village , and Jon Snow faces a new threat at the Wall . The episode 's title refers to the sword fighting lesson that Jon gave to Arya before their farewell : " Stick them with the pointy end . "

This episode attracted 3 @. @ 6 million viewers for the night , a series high . It was well received by critics , who praised Martin 's adaptation of his own work as well as the actors ' performances . It was dedicated to Ralph Vicinanza , an executive producer who died of natural causes . The episode garnered an Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Costumes for a Series , but lost to The Borgias .

= = Plot = =

Like previous episodes , " The Pointy End " interweaves action in multiple separate locations in and around the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros .

= = = In the Mountains of the Moon = = =

As Tyrion (Peter Dinklage) and Bronn (Jerome Flynn) head towards Tywin Lannister 's camp , they are surrounded by one of the barbarian hill tribes of the Vale . Tyrion convinces them to serve as his escorts by promising them gold , weapons and an army to help them seize the Vale of Arryn . Tywin is displeased , but agrees to keep Tyrion 's promises if the hill tribes join the fight against the Starks . The tribesmen agree , but want Tyrion to follow them as insurance , much to Tyrion 's discomfort .

= = = In the Eyrie = = =

Catelyn (Michelle Fairley) confronts her sister Lysa (Kate Dickie) about the letter Catelyn received regarding events at King 's Landing . Lysa refuses to send troops to help the Starks against the Lannisters because she only cares for the safety of her son Robin (Lino Facioli) . A disgusted Catelyn leaves the Eyrie .

= = = In the North = = =

After receiving his sister 's letter (see below) , Robb (Richard Madden) decides that Cersei is manipulating Sansa . He calls his family 's bannermen to war against the Lannisters , much to Theon Greyjoy 's (Alfie Allen) pleasure . After gaining the respect of Stark bannerman Lord " Greatjon " Umber (Clive Mantle) and leaving Bran in charge of Winterfell , Robb and his army march south .

= = = In the Riverlands = = =

The Stark forces , having made camp in the Riverlands , are joined by Catelyn . During a council of war at which Robb ponders whether to attack Tywin 's or Jaime 's forces , his men present him with a captured Lannister scout . Robb decides to let him go with a message to Tywin that " winter is coming " for him , but tricks him into thinking Robb is sending his entire army of 20 @, @ 000 men to attack Tywin .

== = At the Wall == =

Jon Snow (Kit Harington) , Sam (John Bradley) and their party return to the Wall after finding two frozen corpses . Lord Commander Mormont (James Cosmo) recognizes them as Benjen Stark 's fellow rangers and orders their bodies examined . Sam points out that there is no sign of decay on their corpses , even though they have apparently been dead for weeks . Later , Mormont informs Jon about events in the south and warns him to keep his commitment to the Night 's Watch . Jon loses his temper after Ser Alliser Thorne (Owen Teale) mocks Eddard Stark 's treason . Enraged , Jon charges at Thorne with a knife but is held back by his companions and confined to his quarters by Mormont .

Later that night , Jon 's direwolf Ghost behaves strangely , prompting Jon to investigate Mormont 's quarters . As Jon enters , he is attacked by one of the dead rangers , returned to life as a wight . The undead monster is immune to Jon 's sword , continuing to attack even after being run through and losing an arm . As Mormont enters , Jon throws a lantern at the wight , setting the wight ablaze and finally destroying it . The next morning , Mormont and the Night 's Watch burn the two bodies , and Sam tells them that he read that corpses touched by the White Walkers are reanimated and can only be killed by fire .

== = In Lhazar == =

Khal Drogo 's (Jason Momoa) khalasar sacks a Lhazareen village in order to gather funds for the ships they need to invade the Seven Kingdoms . Daenerys Targaryen (Emilia Clarke) is dismayed by their brutality , and after seeing Dothraki raiders gather several village women for use as sex slaves , she orders Ser Jorah Mormont (Iain Glen) and her bodyguards to claim the women as hers . Challenged in front of Drogo , she defends her actions as her right as khaleesi , and demands that the raiders marry rather than enslave the women they desire . Impressed , Drogo sides with his wife , but the leading raider , Mago , is unimpressed and challenges the Khal to a duel . Mago is swiftly killed by Drogo , but not before inflicting a deep wound . Daenerys worries about the wound , and the Khal reluctantly allows one of the spared villagers , a healer by the name of Mirri Maz Duur (Mia Soteriou) , to treat his wounds . This attracts further ire from the Dothraki , who derisively call the woman " maegi " , a witch .

== = In King 's Landing == =

After Ned Stark (Sean Bean) is imprisoned following his failed attempt to arrest Joffrey (Jack Gleeson) and Cersei Lannister (Lena Headey) , the Lannisters move against the rest of the Stark household . While Ned 's eldest daughter Sansa (Sophie Turner) is detained , Arya (Maisie Williams) is able to escape after her fencing teacher Syrio Forel (Miltos Yerolemou) holds off the Lannister men . As Arya runs outside looking for her sword , a stable boy tries to detain her for the Queen , but she fatally stabs him before fleeing the castle .

Cersei convinces Sansa that to save her father 's life , she must write a letter to her brother Robb imploring him to come to King 's Landing and swear fealty to Joffrey . Later , Joffrey and Cersei hold court , where they reward Janos Slynt , the Captain of the City Watch , with a lordship , while Tywin Lannister (Charles Dance) is named the new Hand of the King . Joffrey also relieves Ser Barristan Selmy (Ian McElhinney) as Lord Commander of the Kingsguard and gives his post to Jaime Lannister . Selmy is offered a castle and land in recognition of his service , but a furious Selmy , regarding the offer as an insult , throws his sword at Joffrey 's feet and storms out in disgust . Sansa takes the opportunity to publicly plead for her father 's life , and Joffrey agrees to show mercy if Ned will confess to treason and accept him as the rightful king .

== = Production == =

=== Writing ===

The episode was written by George R. R. Martin , the author of the book A Game of Thrones on which the series is based . Content from this episode also appears in chapters Tyrion VI , Arya IV , Sansa IV , Jon VII , Bran VI , Catelyn VIII , Tyrion VII , Sansa V , the early part of Eddard XV , and Daenerys VII of the novel . Martin has extensive experience in television writing , but it had been a decade since he had produced a teleplay . He said that he found writing this episode very easy because of his familiarity with the characters and the story , and that the hardest part was " getting used to the new screenwriting software that [he] had to use . "

Martin delivered the first draft of the script to the show 's executive producers David Benioff and D. B. Weiss on May 1 , 2010 , admitting that it was probably " too long and too expensive . " In fact , one scene that Martin wrote ? Robb Stark calling his father 's Northern bannermen , with a montage of eight different castles receiving the summons and riding out ? was deemed impossible to film .

The first scenes depicting Tyrion descending with Bronn from the Mountains of the Moon and encountering the clansmen were not written by Martin . Since they were originally intended to be part of episode seven , they were written by that episode 's authors , David Benioff and D. B. Weiss . As often happens in TV production , the scene was moved from one episode to another during editing .

=== Casting ===

" The Pointy End " includes the first appearance of two significant recurring characters in the book series : Clive Mantle as the Northern bannerman Lord Jon Umber , known as the Greatjon due to his size , and Ian Gelder as Lord Tywin 's brother and right @-@ hand man Ser Kevan Lannister .

=== Filming locations ===

Interior scenes were filmed at The Paint Hall studio , in Belfast , including all the scenes set in the Red Keep and Winterfell . The exterior of the Stark and Lannister war camps were shot on location in the Castle Ward estate , near the village of Strangford . Audley 's Castle in the estate doubled as the ruined remains of one of Moat Cailin 's towers , seen when Catelyn and Rodrik join Robb 's army .

The scenes at the village of the Lamb Men that is sacked by the Dothraki were filmed towards the end of October 2010 in Malta , at the farming town of Manikata . For the exterior of the Red Keep where Arya recovers her sword Needle , San Anton Palace was used .

=== Dedication ===

The episode was dedicated to the memory of Ralph Vicinanza . He had been one of the co @-@ executive producers attached to Game of Thrones , and died in his sleep from a cerebral aneurysm on September 25 , 2010 . Vicinanza was the literary agent who handled George R. R. Martin 's foreign language rights , and (with Vince Gerardis) one of the co @-@ founders of the management company Created By which aimed at developing feature films and television shows based on the works of Vicinanza 's clients . He was instrumental in bringing Martin 's work to the screen , recommending the books to David Benioff and D.B. Weiss , and leading the negotiations with HBO . He died a few days after HBO greenlighted the series .

=== Reception ===

=== Ratings ===

The episode was seen by 2 @.@ 7 million viewers for the first airing , a season high , and by

another additional 900 @, @ 000 for the repeat . It therefore obtained a total audience of 3 @. @ 6 million for the night .

= = = Critical response = = =

" The Pointy End " was well received by critics . Among the most enthusiastic was Maureen Ryan from AOL TV , who called it " the best episode yet , " and wrote that she was " extremely impressed with how many moving parts were deployed smoothly and how the hour just flowed . " IGN 's Matt Fowler remarked that this mostly Ned @-@ less episode was very busy ; he enjoyed that Robb got to share the spotlight as viewers witnessed part of his " maturation . "

The episode 's multiple perspectives were commented on : James Hibberd wrote for Entertainment Weekly that " for a show that can often seem disjointed due by having so many storylines unfolding in different locations , this was the most cohesive episode we 've seen yet , as the entire realm was impacted by Ned Stark being arrested for treason . " At HitFix , Alan Sepinwall called it " by far the busiest episode of the series to date , " remarking that it not only moved " pieces around the chess board to set things up for the season 's final two episodes , " but also included " some crackling dialogue , a few good character moments and some of the best action the show has featured to date . " David Sims from the A.V. Club wrote that the episode " masterfully kept us abreast of everything going on , while sticking to the point @-@ of @-@ view style the show has held from the start . " On his blog Cultural Learnings , reviewer Myles McNutt found the episode " filled with moments where much is done with very little . We don 't really spend a sustained period in any one location , with only brief scenes possible to establish some pretty substantial story developments . "

Many critics considered that a great part of the episode 's merits were due to George R. R. Martin 's script . Sepinwall felt that " Martin didn 't get the easiest draw when he wound up having to dramatize the events depicted in ' The Pointy End , ' " but still loved the results . Mo Ryan concluded that anyone who was doubting whether Martin had forgotten about writing television scripts should now put their doubts to rest . The " expert " review from the A.V. Club by Todd VanDerWerff noted " a definite sense of Martin 's hand at work here . Characters that have never quite worked onscreen ? like Sansa ? suddenly feel much more alive . Characters that have been working ? like Tyrion and Arya ? get lots of fun stuff to play that never once feels labored . "

were also noted . According to Elio Garcia from westeros.org , " Sophie Turner really shines in her scenes . There are a lot of people out there who judge Sansa very harshly , but you would have to have a heart of stone not to sympathize with her plight in this episode . " Many reviewers agreed with this sentiment , commenting on the transition from a " spoiled brat " to a young , confused , but courageous teenager were noted by several reviewers positively . Time 's reviewer James Poniewozik emphasized the growth of Robb Stark 's character , praising both Martin 's writing and Richard Madden 's acting . Maureen Ryan highlighted the scene where Syrio Forel confronts the Lannister men to allow Arya 's escape , which she considered masterfully staged .

= = = Emmy nomination = = =

Michele Clapton (costume designer) and Rachael Webb @-@ Crozier (costume supervisor) were nominated for the 2011 Emmy Award for Outstanding Costumes for a Series for " The Pointy End " , but lost to The Borgias .