

= The Kingsroad =

" The Kingsroad " is the second episode of the HBO medieval fantasy television series Game of Thrones , first aired on April 24 , 2011 . It was written by the show creators David Benioff and D. B. Weiss , and directed by Tim Van Patten .

Nearly all the action of the episode happens during travel : Eddard Stark and his daughters accompany the king 's entourage to King 's Landing to occupy the post of Hand of the King , Tyrion joins Jon in his travel to the Wall , and the newly wed Daenerys goes with her husband 's khalasar to the city of Vaes Dothrak . Meanwhile in Winterfell a grieving Catelyn Stark watches over her unconscious son Bran .

Viewing figures were unchanged from the premiere , despite the second episode airing on Easter Sunday . Critical reception to the episode was favorable . Filming locations included several notable Northern Ireland locations , and the filming itself was complicated by the difficulty of integrating canine actors into several crucial scenes .

= = Plot = =

= = = In the Dothraki Sea = = =

On their way to Vaes Dothrak with Drogo 's khalasar , Jorah Mormont (Iain Glen) reveals to Viserys (Harry Lloyd) that he was exiled for selling poachers to slavers . Viserys assures Jorah that he would not have been punished if Viserys had been the king and demonstrates impatience for Drogo (Jason Momoa) to lend Viserys his army .

Daenerys (Emilia Clarke) has difficulty adjusting to her new marriage and the nomadic lifestyle of her adopted people . Her only comfort is the three petrified dragon eggs given to her by Illyrio . She is visibly distraught and in pain during intimate relations with the Khal . In order to feel more in control of her marital life , she asks one of her handmaidens , former courtesan Doreah (Roxanne McKee) , to teach her how to please her new husband .

= = = In the North = = =

Bran (Isaac Hempstead @-@ Wright) has been in a coma for more than a month since being thrown from the tower by Jaime Lannister . After slapping his nephew Prince Joffrey (Jack Gleeson) for refusing to give his condolences to the Starks , Tyrion Lannister (Peter Dinklage) informs his siblings that despite Bran 's fall , the boy will survive , much to the dismay of the incestuous Lannister twins .

It is time for farewells , with the Stark family having to split apart . Ned 's two daughters journey with their father to the capital . Jon Snow (Kit Harington) journeys to join his uncle Benjen (Joseph Mawle) as a man of the Night 's Watch at the Wall . Tyrion , who wants to see the " edge of the world " , accompanies them . Before leaving , Jon gives a sword to his sister Arya (Maisie Williams) as a present . Lady Catelyn Stark (Michelle Fairley) is devastated by her husband 's imminent departure and has stood vigil beside her son Bran since his fall . Having always deeply resented Jon , Catelyn asks him to leave when he comes to say goodbye to Bran and then chastises her husband Ned (Sean Bean) for leaving her and giving in to the demands of King Robert (Mark Addy) . Before they part , Jon asks Ned about his mother , and Ned promises to tell Jon about her the next time they meet . While stopping for a meal , Robert tells Ned that he has received word about Daenerys Targaryen 's wedding to Khal Drogo and voices concern about the possibility of Viserys crossing the Narrow Sea with a Dothraki army to overthrow him with help from those in the Seven Kingdoms who still support the Targaryens ' claim to the throne and think of Robert as a usurper .

Late one night after Ned 's departure , a fire breaks out at Winterfell , and during the ensuing chaos , a hired assassin tries to kill Bran . Catelyn holds off the attacker long enough for Bran 's direwolf to jump in and tear out the assassin 's throat . The murder attempt arouses Catelyn 's suspicions , and

after finding a strand of long blonde hair in the abandoned tower where Bran fell , she concludes that the Lannisters are somehow involved . After confiding with her most trusted advisers - her son Robb (Richard Madden) , Maester Luwin (Donald Sumpter) , Master @-@ at @-@ Arms Ser Rodrik Cassel (Ron Donachie) and the Starks ' ward Theon Greyjoy (Alfie Allen) - she decides to go to King 's Landing in secret with Rodrik as her escort to warn her husband .

= = = At the Wall = = =

Jon and Tyrion see the Wall for the first time as they arrive with Benjen and the other recruits . En route to the Wall , Tyrion and Jon discuss the Night 's Watch . Tyrion is quick to disabuse Jon of his romantic notions of the Watch as a noble calling battling the mythical horrors beyond the Wall (as it was in history) , pointing out that now it is more a dumping ground for the unwanted of Westeros : criminals , prisoners , and bastards .

= = = At the Inn at the Crossroads = = =

On their way to King 's Landing , the king 's entourage has stopped to rest at an inn . While the recently promised Prince Joffrey (Jack Gleeson) and Sansa Stark (Sophie Turner) are walking along the river , they run into Arya sparring with sticks with her friend , a butcher 's boy named Mycah (Rhodri Hosking) . Taunting the boy , Joffrey draws his sword and demands a duel , under pretext of punishing him for accidentally hitting Arya , a member of the nobility . Mycah and Arya desperately explain that she asked him to spar with her so she could practice . As Joffrey savors the butcher boy 's pain and fear , Arya hits Joffrey while her friend flees . Enraged , Joffrey turns on Arya and is about to strike her with his sword when her direwolf Nymeria bites his wrist . Arya seizes his sword and throws it into the river before running into the forest , where she drives away Nymeria and hides until dark .

Afterward , Joffrey lies to the courtly entourage and accuses Arya and her direwolf of ganging up on him . Unwilling to lose favor with her betrothed by publicly exposing his lie , Sansa claims she remembers nothing . Sick of the petty bickering , King Robert chastises his son for allowing himself to be disarmed by the younger girl and declares that the fathers themselves will punish their respective children , dismissing the audience . However , Robert gives in to his wife Cersei 's (Lena Headey) demands and orders the direwolf killed . Since Nymeria has fled , Sansa 's wolf , Lady , is to be sacrificed . Unable to convince the king otherwise , Eddard takes responsibility for killing Sansa 's pet himself . As he walks to the back of the inn , he encounters Joffrey 's bodyguard , Sandor " The Hound " Clegane (Rory McCann) , who has ridden down the butcher 's boy and brought in his bloody corpse for the prince .

Eddard approaches Lady and holds her down as he unsheathes a blade . Saddened , he kills the direwolf , who utters a sharp cry of pain . Meanwhile , up North , Bran suddenly awakens from his coma and opens his eyes as Sansa 's wolf is killed .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

The second episode 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 . " The Kingsroad " includes chapters 10 @-@ 11 , 13 @-@ 18 and 24 . (Tyrion I , Jon II , Eddard II , Tyrion II , Catelyn III , Sansa I , Eddard III , Bran III , Daenerys III .)

While the events in this episode follow the book , differences in the screen adaptation include not introducing the council 's delegation with Ser Barristan and Lord Renly and the conversation between Robert and Eddard taking place during breakfast instead of on horseback . Some scenes were also created for the series , most notably a conversation between Catelyn and Cersei at Bran

's bedside remembering a Queen 's dead infant , and a confrontation between Jaime and Jon before Jon leaves for the Wall .

= = = Casting = = =

This episode marks the first appearance of regular guest star Roxanne McKee , best known for her role of Louise Summers in the British Channel 4 soap opera Hollyoaks . McKee was chosen among a great number of candidates to play the part of Doreah , a slave serving as Daenerys Targaryen 's handmaiden .

Also introduced in this episode is British musician Wilko Johnson as the executioner Ilyn Payne . The mute headsman of Game of Thrones is Johnson 's first acting job .

= = = Filming locations = = =

The principal shooting for the episode was done at The Paint Hall studio . The scenes at the Inn at the Crossroads were filmed on location at the Redhall Estate , in Ballycarry , during the first days of September 2010 .

= = = Direwolves = = =

" The Kingsroad " has a significant number of scenes that include direwolves . To stand in for the extinct species , the production team considered using real wolves , but the UK safety laws and close work with child actors made this impractical . Instead , they chose to use Northern Inuit Dogs due to their resemblance to wolves .

During this episode , the dogs had to interact with the main characters , which proved difficult . Actor Sean Bean reported that for the final scene where he has to sacrifice Lady , the animal was too scared to remain still . They had to keep rehearsing the scene until the dog felt comfortable , making a shot that should have taken a few minutes about three hours long .

The dog that portrayed Lady , Zanni , was adopted after the season wrapped by the family of Sophie Turner , the actress playing the direwolf 's owner , Sansa Stark .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

The second episode of Game of Thrones attracted the same viewing figures as the premiere , with 2 @. @ 2 million viewers . The second repeat obtained 0 @. @ 7 million , which was also similar to the previous week 's figure . These ratings have been considered positive , especially considering that it was aired on an Easter Sunday .

= = = Critical response = = =

Critical reaction was favorable , although some critics felt it was inferior to the first episode . Review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes surveyed 10 reviews of the episode and judged 100 % of them to be positive . The website 's critical consensus reads , " ' The Kingsroad ' brings surprising new developments for characters undergoing change while pushing the various plots forward at an effective pace . " Entertainment Weekly 's James Hibberd considered the second episode better than the first one , while TV Squad 's Maureen Ryan gave " The Kingsroad " the lowest score from the first six episodes of the series . Matt Fowler , who reviewed the episode for IGN , gave it a score of 8 / 10 , and maintained that it was still a solid effort that focused on shifting all the main characters out of their comfort zones . Tod VanDerWerff , from The A.V. Club , gave the episode a " B , " saying " it was a small step up from the pilot ... and is a particularly eventful hour of Game Of

Thrones , layering on plot point after plot point in a brisk , fairly economical matter . "

Alan Sepiwall , from HitFix , has described " The Kingsroad " as a transition episode and therefore " not as likely to excite as the premiere or some of the season 's later episodes . " Maureen Ryan felt that the show lacked a thematic unity , and while it had some effective moments , in some ways " lacked emotional spark . " At Cultural Learnings , Myles McNutt admitted that having to move all pieces into place made the episode resemble a travelogue , but he considered the lack of cohesion to be very purposeful since it helped to emphasize the splitting of the Stark family and the different motivations and destinies that awaited the protagonists .