

= Cripples , Bastards , and Broken Things =

" Cripples , Bastards , and Broken Things " is the fourth episode of the HBO medieval fantasy television series Game of Thrones , which first aired on May 8 , 2011 . It was written by Bryan Cogman and directed by Brian Kirk . In this episode Lord Eddard Stark , the new Hand of the King , investigates the sudden death of his predecessor . Jon Snow , Eddard 's bastard son , defends a new recruit who has just joined the rangers at " the Wall . " Exiled prince Viserys becomes increasingly frustrated as the Dothraki horde he needs to invade Westeros and win back his crown continues to linger at Vaes Dothrak . The episode ends with Eddard 's wife Catelyn arresting Tyrion Lannister on suspicion of attempting to murder her son Bran .

The title comes from the original book , spoken by Tyrion after he provides Bran Stark with a saddle design that will allow him to ride despite his paraplegia : " I have a tender spot in my heart for cripples and bastards and broken things . " While the episode is more exposition @-@ heavy than previous episodes , its viewership increased slightly over the third episode , and it was well received by critics . The scenes at the Wall were highlighted by multiple critics as particularly compelling and accessible .

= = Plot = =

= = = In King 's Landing = = =

Lord Eddard Stark begins quietly inquiring into the death of Jon Arryn , the previous Hand of the King , who had long served as the Kingdom 's chief administrative nobleman . Questioning Grand Maester Pycelle (Julian Glover) , who tended Jon Arryn in his final days , Stark learns that Arryn 's last words were " the seed is strong " and that he was reading a book titled The Lineages and Histories of the Great Houses of the Seven Kingdoms .

Helped by Petyr " Littlefinger " Baelish (Aidan Gillen) and his net of informers , Eddard follows up on two more clues regarding the last days of his predecessor . He questions a smith 's apprentice whom Jon Arryn had visited in his last days and , due to his resemblance to King Robert , Stark deduces that the boy is the king 's bastard . Eddard also plans to question Jon Arryn 's former squire , but the recently knighted young man is killed while jousting at the tournament held in Eddard 's honor . The knight responsible for his untimely end is Ser Gregor Clegane (Conan Stevens) , also known as " the Mountain " due to his towering size . He is a Lannister bannerman and is the older brother of " the Hound " Sandor Clegane . Baelish tells Sansa the secret of the Clegane brothers : as children , Gregor brutally burned his brother 's face , thus explaining the Hound 's scars .

= = = In Vaes Dothrak = = =

Khal Drogo 's khalasar arrives at the city of Vaes Dothrak . Viserys Targaryen (Harry Lloyd) impatiently waits for the army Drogo (Jason Momoa) agreed to lend him , the bride price offered for his sister Daenerys (Emilia Clarke) , to reconquer the Seven Kingdoms . When Viserys misinterprets Daenerys ' invitation to dinner as an order , he becomes angry and strikes her . For the first time , Daenerys fights back , hitting her astounded brother and promising that if he raises a hand against her again , his hands will be cut off . Later , the banished knight Jorah Mormont (Iain Glen) tells her that Viserys would not be a good leader for the invasion of Westeros and , despite what Viserys believes , the people of the Seven Kingdoms do not care who rules them as long as they are ruled well . Daenerys agrees that Viserys could not conquer the Seven Kingdoms even if Khal Drogo gave him an entire army .

= = = At the Wall = = =

The Night 's Watch receives Samwell Tarly (John Bradley) , a fat , fearful and clumsy recruit who

rapidly becomes the focus of bullying by master @-@ at @-@ arms Ser Alliser Thorne (Owen Teale) . Sam later explains to Jon that his father forced him to " take the Black " and forsake his inheritance because he considered Sam unworthy , threatening to kill Sam and pass his death off as a hunting accident if he refused . Jon Snow (Kit Harington) defends Sam and convinces the rest of the recruits not to harm him , much to Thorne 's rage . Thorne defends his treatment as essential , since life north of the Wall is very harsh especially during winter , warning Jon and Sam to toughen up or they will have no chance of survival .

= = = In the North = = =

Tyrion (Peter Dinklage) stops at Winterfell as he is returning to King 's Landing after his visit to the Wall . He gets a cold welcome from Robb Stark (Richard Madden) , acting Lord of Winterfell in his father Eddard 's absence . Robb suspects the Lannisters are behind his younger brother Bran 's fall and the subsequent assassination attempt . Despite the cold reception , Tyrion shows the now crippled Bran an act of kindness by giving him blueprints for a saddle that will allow him to ride again despite his paraplegia . Before he leaves Winterfell , Tyrion has a talk with Theon Greyjoy (Alfie Allen) , a ward of House Stark , and mocks him regarding how the Greyjoys and their land , the Iron Islands , attempted a failed rebellion against King Robert , calling Theon a " hostage " to the Stark family .

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

Further south , Tyrion and his small retinue stop to spend the night at the Inn at the Crossroads . There he recognizes Lady Catelyn Stark (Michelle Fairley) in disguise . With her identity revealed , she requests help from her father 's bannermen present at the inn to seize Tyrion to face trial for Bran 's attempted murder .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

" Cripples , Bastards , and Broken Things " is the first episode of the series that was not written by the show 's creators and executive producers David Benioff and D. B. Weiss . The script was authored by writer Bryan Cogman , based on George R. R. Martin 's original work .

Cogman worked on the Game of Thrones 's pilot as a writing assistant and was contracted for the full series as script @-@ editor and the unofficial " keeper of the mythos " for the show , entrusted with the task of writing the series bible outlining character and background information , and making sure that the world @-@ building remained consistent . In this capacity , he was approached by Benioff and Weiss , who asked him to write a treatment for the fourth episode . Believing it was only an exercise that would be completely rewritten by another professional writer , he completed the script that ended up being episode four .

The chapters of the book covered in this episode are Bran IV (less the first few pages that were included in the previous episode) , Eddard V , Jon IV , Eddard VI , Catelyn V , Sansa II , Daenerys IV (chapters 25 ? 30 and 37) . Among the scenes created for the show , there are the conversations between Theon and Tyrion , Sansa and Septa Mordane , Doreah and Viserys , Jory Cassel and Jaime , Jon and Samwell and Eddard Stark and Cersei . The character of Alliser Thorne is given some more depth by justifying his harshness towards the new recruits , and a more subdued version of Bran 's dream is included .

During the bathtub scene in which Viserys recalls the old Targaryen dragons , he lists names taken from the books (Balerion , Meraxes and Vhagar) and others invented for the show . Among them a dragon called Vermithrax is mentioned , which is an homage to Vermithrax Pejorative from the 1981 film Dragonslayer . Author George R. R. Martin once ranked the film the fifth best fantasy movie of

all time , and called Vermithrax " the best dragon ever put on film , " and the one with " the coolest dragon name as well . "

== = Casting == =

This episode introduces the character of Samwell Tarly , a new recruit of the Night 's Watch and a self @-@ described coward . John Bradley was cast in the part , the actor 's first professional appearance after graduating from the Manchester Metropolitan School of Theatre . The scene used in the auditions belonged to " Cripples , Bastards , and Broken Things , " with Sam explaining to Jon how his father forced him to take the black . According to author and executive producer George R. R. Martin , Bradley delivered " a heartbreaking performance . "

Australian actor Conan Stevens , whose official website lists his height as 214 cm (7 ' 1 / 4 ") , first appears as the gigantic knight Gregor Clegane , known as " the Mountain . " Stevens had sought to join the production since HBO started developing Game of Thrones . Since the character of Gregor Clegane , the role he believed he was most fitted for , did not appear in the pilot , he auditioned for the role of Khal Drogo instead in the hopes of getting noticed by the casting team . Although that role went to Jason Momoa , Stevens was chosen for the part of Gregor .

Other recurring roles making their first appearance in the episode include Dominic Carter as commander of the City Watch Janos Slynt , Jerome Flynn as the mercenary (" sellsword ") Bronn , and Joe Dempsie as the smith 's apprentice Gendry . The character of Gendry was made older for the series than he appears in the books .

== = Props == =

The book of lineages Ned receives from Pycelle was prepared by Bryan Cogman , who in addition to writing episode four also served as the show 's " lore master " and authored the historical background content included in the first season 's DVD and Blu @-@ ray release . Cogman wrote two pages worth of text detailing the lineage of four noble houses . The text concerning house Umber was shown in " Cripples , Bastards , and Broken Things , " and the Baratheon text appears in episode six , " A Golden Crown . " Cogman also wrote text for the houses of Targaryen and Royce , but the corresponding scenes were removed from the final script for episode four . Cogman said that he drew on the novels and the fan @-@ created website Wiki of Ice and Fire for reference , and invented what could not be sourced , including even some Internet fan message board names as in @-@ jokes .

== = Filming locations == =

The episode was shot at Belfast 's studio The Paint Hall , including interior shots of King 's Landing , and on location throughout Northern Ireland : The scenes taking place at the grounds of Castle Black continued to be filmed at the large exterior set built on the abandoned quarry of Magheramorne , the grounds of the ruined Shane 's Castle were used as the location of the tournament , and the area known as the Sandy Brae , at the foot of the Mourne Mountains , was used for the entrance to Vaes Dothrak . Much of this episode was filmed early in the production ; an Eddard and Arya scene from this episode was filmed on the very first day of shooting .

== = Reception == =

== = Ratings == =

" Cripples , Bastards , and Broken Things " ' s first airing was seen by 2 @.@ 5 million viewers , a slight increase from the previous episode 's 2 @.@ 4 million . Including the repeat , the night 's viewers totalled 3 @.@ 1 million , which was also in line with the previous week 's ratings . In the UK

, the viewership increased significantly , rising to 628 @, @ 000 viewers from 510 @, @ 000 the previous week .

= = = Critical response = = =

" Cripples , Bastards , and Broken Things " was received positively by critics . Todd VanDerWerff from the A.V. Club gave it an A- , and Maureen Ryan from AOL TV rated it with a 70 out of 100 .

VanDerWerff stated this was his favorite episode of the show so far , " an hour that simultaneously feels more propulsive and more relaxed than the last three . " He admitted that the better part of it was given to exposition , with many monologues by the characters to expose their motivations and background . In his opinion , though , it was done skillfully and efficiently . IGN 's Matt Fowler wrote that it was another great , exposition @-@ heavy episode and that the best and most natural scene happened between Viserys and Doreah in the bath .

Out of the different storylines , many critics singled out the scenes on the Wall as the best . Myles McNutt from Cultural Learnings wrote that " Jon Snow 's time at the Wall is maybe my favorite central location of those introduced early in the series , and it is in large part due to the work done in this episode , " and Maureen Ryan stated that " they 're exceptionally well acted and written . John Bradley is a great addition as Samwell Tarly , and I continue to be very impressed with Kit Harington 's quietly charismatic performance as Jon . " Besides the acting and the writing , both agreed that one of the reasons the Night 's Watch scenes worked for them is that it was easy to connect with the story of a group of raw recruits bonding under a hard @-@ nosed trainer who tries to prepare them to face great danger .

The closing scene was praised by HitFix 's Alan Sepinwall , highlighting Michelle Fairley 's acting as Catelyn gathers allies to arrest Tyrion .