

= A Golden Crown =

" A Golden Crown " is the sixth episode of the HBO medieval fantasy television series Game of Thrones , first aired on May 22 , 2011 . The teleplay was written by Jane Espenson , David Benioff and D.B. Weiss from a story by Benioff and Weiss , and directed by Daniel Minahan .

The episode 's plot depicts the deterioration of the political balance of the seven kingdoms , with Eddard Stark having to deal with the Lannister aggressions while King Robert is away on a hunt . At the Eyrie , Tyrion is put on trial , and across the Narrow Sea , Viserys Targaryen is determined to force Khal Drogo to make him king .

The episode was well received by critics , who praised aspects of the King 's Landing storyline and the culmination of Viserys ' storyline .

= = Plot = =

Like previous episodes , " A Golden Crown " interweaves action happening in multiple separate locations within and around the Kingdom of Westeros .

= = = In the North = = =

Bran Stark ( Isaac Hempstead @-@ Wright ) is awakened from one of his recurring dreams of a three @-@ eyed crow with the pleasant surprise that the specially designed saddle that will allow him to ride has been finished . He goes to test it in the forest under the supervision of his brother Robb ( Richard Madden ) and Theon Greyjoy ( Alfie Allen ) .

While Theon is trying to convince Robb to avenge his father for the Lannisters ' attack , a small group of wildlings ( humans who live north of the wall , outside of " civilized " lands ) , who have ventured south , capture Bran . Robb and Theon manage to kill all the men and capture the woman Osha ( Natalia Tena ) . Despite Theon 's help , Robb chastises him for endangering Bran 's life when Theon shot an arrow at the wildling who was holding Bran .

= = = In the Eyrie = = =

Tyrion ( Peter Dinklage ) is able to trick Lysa Arryn ( Kate Dickie ) into summoning a court to listen to his confession , at which he confesses various misdemeanours committed during his life , but nothing about the attempt on Bran 's life or Lysa 's husband 's death . After , Tyrion publicly demands a trial by combat , and the mercenary Bronn ( Jerome Flynn ) volunteers to fight for him . Lysa Arryn has no choice but to allow it . Bronn defeats Lysa 's champion Ser Vardis Egen ( Brendan McCormack ) by tiring the heavily armored knight and kicking him out the Moon Door , and Tyrion is allowed to walk free with Bronn as his escort , much to the dismay of the Tully sisters .

= = = In King 's Landing = = =

Eddard Stark ( Sean Bean ) awakens in his chambers with Robert ( Mark Addy ) and Cersei ( Lena Headey ) watching him . Cersei accuses Eddard of kidnapping her brother , Tyrion , and claims Eddard was drunk and attacked Jaime first , but she is silenced by a slap from Robert . After she leaves , Robert tells Eddard that he cannot rule the kingdoms if the Lannisters and Starks are at war and insists that Eddard remain the Hand of the King , or else Robert will give the position to Jaime . Robert also informs Eddard that he will be regent while Robert is away on a hunting trip .

Meanwhile , Arya ( Maisie Williams ) deals with her father 's injury and her loss of Jory during her sword @-@ dance lessons ; Syrio ( Miltos Yerolemou ) tells her it 's a perfect opportunity for her to learn to avoid distraction while fighting . In the Starks ' common room , Sansa ( Sophie Turner ) and Septa Mordane are interrupted by Prince Joffrey ( Jack Gleeson ) , who apologizes to Sansa for his earlier behavior and gives her a necklace , vowing that she will become his queen in an elaborate wedding ceremony . Sansa happily accepts the apology , unaware Joffrey has been forced into it by

his mother .

While acting as regent , Eddard learns that Ser Gregor " The Mountain " Clegane was spotted leading brigands and attacking villages in the Riverlands . Realizing this is revenge for Tyrion 's arrest , Eddard orders Ser Beric Dondarrion ( David Michael Scott ) to secure Gregor 's arrest , strips him of his lands and titles , and summons his Lord Tywin Lannister to answer for Gregor 's actions . Fearing war with the Lannisters and for his daughters ' lives , he orders Arya and Sansa to return to Winterfell for their safety . Sansa protests and mentions Joffrey 's blond hair ; Eddard realizes something and re @-@ reads the book of lineages of the Baratheon family . Doing so , he puts the pieces together : Joffrey does not have black hair like his father , his father 's ancestors , and Robert 's bastards whom he and Jon Arryn had been researching . Eddard concludes Joffrey is not Robert 's real son .

= = = In Vaes Dothrak = = =

Daenerys ( Emilia Clarke ) takes one of the dragon eggs and places it on a glowing @-@ hot brazier . She reaches in and picks up the blisteringly hot egg . Her handmaiden rushes in to take the hot egg from her hands , burning herself in the process , but Daenerys ' hands are completely unscathed .

Daenerys begins the ritual with the Dosh Khaleen by eating the raw heart of a stallion . After some struggle , she completes the task and stands up to proclaim her unborn son as the Khal who will unite the entire world as one khalasar , and she names him Rhaego . Viserys ( Harry Lloyd ) grows angry at his sister 's increasing popularity among the Dothraki , but Jorah Mormont ( Iain Glen ) urges patience . Viserys ignores him and sneaks away to Daenerys ' tent to steal the dragon eggs to fund a new army . However , Jorah confronts him , forcing Viserys to leave the eggs behind . Viserys storms off after a tense exchange of words between the two men .

Later , at a feast for Daenerys and Khal Drogo , a drunken Viserys draws his sword on his sister , threatening that if the Khal does not give him an army to take back the Seven Kingdoms , he will take back Daenerys and cut out her child . Khal Drogo agrees to give him the " golden crown " that he wants , and Viserys lets his guard down , allowing Drogo 's bloodriders to restrain him . Drogo melts his belt in a stewpot , and Viserys realises to his horror that the " golden crown " is actually molten gold , which Drogo pours on his head . Daenerys watches her brother 's painful death calmly , and coldly observes : " He was no dragon . Fire cannot kill a dragon . "

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

The teleplay for " A Golden Crown " was written by Jane Espenson , David Benioff and D. B. Weiss from a story by Benioff and Weiss , based on A Game of Thrones by George R. R. Martin . The episode includes the book 's chapters 38 @-@ 41 , 44 @-@ 45 and 47 ( Bran V , Tyrion V , Eddard X , Catelyn VII , Eddard XI , Sansa III , and Daenerys V ) . Chapter 42 ( Jon V ) , dealing with Jon convincing Maester Aemon to allow Samwell to join the Watch as a steward , was removed from the series , and chapter 43 ( Tyrion VI ) was moved to episode 8 .

= = = Casting = = =

The episode introduces the recurring character of the wildling Osha . The writer of the original books , George R. R. Martin , admitted that this casting was different from his vision of the character . As he explains , he was surprised to see that actress Natalia Tena was being considered for the role since Osha had been conceived as a hard @-@ bitten older woman and the actress was " too young and too hot . " However , when he saw the audition tapes he was convinced with the new approach : " she was sensational , and I said , ' It 's gotta be her . ' "

## == Staging and props ==

The scene in which Daenerys has to eat a horse's heart was filmed in The Paint Hall studio in Belfast. There, the production built the Dothraki temple in which the scene is set: a large semicircular structure of wood and woven reeds, inspired by Marsh Arab constructions. The heart actress Emilia Clarke ate was, according to Weiss, "basically a giant, three @-@ pound gummy bear covered in fake sugar blood" which has the added attraction of drawing real flies. "Through repeated takes, Clarke did have to eat much of the sugary heart. She said that it tasted of bleach and was made tough and gristly by the addition of valves made from "something like dried pasta." Clarke did not have to act in the shots at the end of the scene in which Daenerys almost throws up the last bit of heart, as she was indeed close to vomiting at that point.

The book of lineages that helps Ned realize the truth about Joffrey's father was prepared by Bryan Cogman, who in addition to writing episode four ("Cripples, Bastards, and Broken Things") also served as the show's "lore master" and authored the background content concerning the history of Westeros that is to be 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 episode four, and the Baratheon text appears in episode six. Cogman also wrote text for the houses of Targaryen and Royce, but the corresponding scenes were removed from the final script for "Cripples, Bastards, and Broken Things" but the Targaryen page was shown in "A Golden Crown". 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.

## == Reception ==

### === Ratings ===

For the first time since the premiere of the show the ratings decreased in relation to the previous weeks. The first airing brought 2 @.@ 4 million viewers, compared to the 2 @.@ 6 million gathered by the previous episode. With the second airing the differences shrank, bringing the total of the night to 3 @.@ 2 million, one hundred thousand viewers below the previous week's 3 @.@ 3.

## == Critical response ==

"A Golden Crown" received positive reviews from 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. HitFix's Alan Sepinwall titled his review "The rules get upended in a terrific episode." Both Elio Garcia from westeros.org and Jace Lacob from Televisionary considered it the best episode of the series so far. In the words of reviewer Jace Lacob, the episode "revolves around changes both great and small, about the way the scales can fall from our eyes and we can see the truth that has been standing in front of us for so long. For Eddard, it's a realization of just why Jon Arryn died, of the terrible secret he had gleaned from the book of royal lineages, and just what this could mean for the throne ... and for the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. For Dany, it's the brutal truth of her brother's real nature, of his insatiable thirst for power and the twisted quality of his rampant heart."

The Dothraki scenes that culminate with the "crowning" of Viserys Targaryen were acclaimed by the critics. Writing for Time, James Poniewozik highlighted an acting of "touching self @-@ recognition by Harry Lloyd, who did an outstanding job humanizing a villain," and Maureen Ryan congratulated the actor for his "excellent job of showing the human side of this impetuous, cruel aristocrat" and "keeping Viserys just this side of sane in all his scenes." The acting of Emilia Clarke, closing her arc initiated in the first episode from a frightened girl to an empowered woman was also praised. VanDerWerff commented on the difficulty to adapt such an evolution from page to

screen , but concluded that " Clarke and Lloyd more than seal the deal here . " IGN 's Matt Fowler also praised Clarke and noted that Daenerys ' choice to watch Viserys die was " powerful " and an important shift in her character .

Another aspect of the show that was widely discussed among commentators was the moral dilemma presented in the episode between a pragmatic approach to ruling or remaining true to the ideals of justice and honor , exemplified in the scene where Eddard summons Tywin Lannister to the court to answer for the crimes of his bannerman Gregor Clegane . Poniewozik states that Eddard " doesn 't seem to consider that he has options : he is left to rule in the king 's place , an injustice has been committed , the law requires one path to justice and he chooses it . This makes his decision easy , but it may make his life , and others ' , difficult . " According to The Atlantic 's Scott Meslow , " Ned 's principles are , as always , admirable , and he 's clearly interested in justice . But the sad truth is that the lack of guile that makes him honorable also makes him a pretty poor king . It 's a terrible idea to order the arrest of the man who is single @-@ handedly financing your kingdom . " Myles McNutt , writing for Cultural Learnings , agreed with Meslow and concluded that " the only thing more dangerous than a reckless man asserting their [ sic ] power in Westeros is an honorable man doing the same , as it threatens the delicate framework which has propped up King Robert for so long . "

= = = Accolades = = =

The episode received three Emmy nominations in 2011 , for Outstanding Prosthetic Makeup for a Series , Miniseries , Movie or a Special ; Outstanding Hairstyling for a Single @-@ Camera Series ; and Outstanding Sound Editing for a Series .