

TV Review: Game of Thrones Season 4 Episode 3: 'Breaker of Chains'

The Purple Wedding reception. [George Wood](#) reviews

Monday 28 April 2014



Rating: ★★★★★☆

Warning: this article contains spoilers.

"Money buys a man's silence for a time. A bolt in the heart buys it forever" – Littlefinger

It's hard to talk about episode three of this series without discussing the rape scene between Jaime and Cersei. This scene was the reason why it was so difficult to write a review last week, especially considering how it was changed from being consensual in the books (the whole twincestuous-sex-by-the-dead-son was disturbing enough). Given Jaime's redemptive arc last season, which involved him saving Brienne from being gang-raped, it's very hard to justify why the producers went ahead with this scene.

What makes things worse is that in the following episode, 'Oathkeeper', there appears to be no repercussions of the rape. Cersei is just as pissed off with Jaime as before, and Jaime continues his redemptive arc by sticking up for Tyrion and by handing Brienne his Valyrian sword (later renamed "Oathkeeper") to help save Sansa from Cersei's vengeful rage. It's as if the rape never happened, or simply there to break another taboo on television. For a show that has justifiable (if gratuitous) depictions of sex and violence, this is disappointing.

But these reviews are meant to judge each episode in their own right, and 'Breaker of Chains' was

otherwise a thoroughly enjoyable episode. Sansa's escape and the reveal of Littlefinger as the mastermind behind Joffrey's death at the start was thrilling (albeit slightly surprising - I half-expected the whole whodunnit to be dragged on for a while). Tywin was involved in two brilliantly crafted scenes: one that saw him talking about what makes a good king to manipulate the king-to-be Tommen (a perfect foil to his brother Joffrey if there ever was one), and another that saw him go head-to-head with the already well-established Oberyn. *Game of Thrones* is at its best when political and family tensions rumble under verbal sparring and sharply delivered dialogue.

Podrick's farewell scene with Tyrion (who is now in a cell, waiting for trial), was actually quite touching - a testament to the show's ability to make you care for the less significant characters of the series. The scenes outside of King's Landing are a bit dull, though Arya confronting the Hound on his grim but realistic assumptions about survival once again highlight how interesting their relationship is. ("You're the worst shit in the Seven Kingdoms!" "Plenty worse than me, I just understand the way things are. How many Starks have they got to behead before you figure things out?")

The episode ended with Daenerys' confrontation with Mereen's slave traders, and a wonderfully shot duel / pissing contest involving Daario Naharis. The "dracarys" scene from last season felt more epic, but in comparison this closing scene was great because it didn't rely on Daenerys' dragons, instead her strength as a ruler.

And though Daenerys isn't aware of the Purple Wedding yet, her scene fits in thematically with other characters adjusting their influence in wake of Joffrey's death. Characters like Tywin and Littlefinger rise above it, Tyrion sinks below it, and Arya and the Hound just do their best to keep on living. It's a shame then that Jaime and Cersei's story lines were botched up with the rape scene - it may represent Cersei's powerlessness, but in a way that is totally inappropriate and (judging by the following episode) with disappointingly few implications.



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