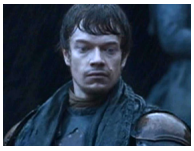
Latest episode features a massive departure from the source material.
By Josh Wigler



Alfie Allen in "Game of Thrones"
Photo: HBO

See that beautiful platinum-blond princess across the way? That's Daenerys Targaryen. Stay away from her. Everyone she loves dies or gets taken away — not ideal for those of you who value your lives.

Honestly, as much as I'm loving this season, I'm not happy with where "Game of Thrones" is taking Dany. I'm an avid fan of George R.R. Martin's source material but not a stickler or purist who believes his novels must be adapted to the letter. Still, the liberties taken with Dany in Qarth, this week in particular, feel needless and damaging to who the character is.

We'll get deeper into that later in our recap. Keep reading for more updates from Westeros, most of them blood-soaked and reeking of death — with one lovely exception.

Bye-Bye, Whiskers

Northerners, man. Those guys have a hard time hanging onto their heads, don't they? Ser Rodrick is the latest to die on the chopping block, at the hands of the traitorous (not to mention embarrassingly weak) Theon Greyjoy, now fancying himself Lord of Winterfell and Prince of the Iron Islands. As we say goodbye to the sweetest whiskers in Westeros, Rodrick's final words ring true: Theon really is truly lost now. But where Theon falls, his performer rises: Actor Alfie Allen continues to kill it as Theon this season. If you think you've seen him at his lowest after this week — well, keep watching.

Gone With the Reeds

With Winterfell sacked, Bran and his companions are left powerless ... well, not entirely powerless. The crafty Osha sleeps with Theon and manages to sneak Bran, Rickon, Hodor and the direwolves out of House Stark's royal seat as a result. It's cool to see this story moving so quickly, but still, where are Jojen and Meera Reed? The greenseer and his sister are huge parts of Bran's story at this point in the books, but with their continued absence and Osha's increasing prominence, I'm beginning to think they're out of the picture for good. Casualty of adaptation, I suppose, but a change I'm sorry to see.

Ra Ra Riot

The North isn't the only area of Westeros under fire. In King's Landing, the wicked Joffrey's awful behavior nearly costs him his life when he incites a bloody riot that turns the streets red. He barely escapes with his life — though he thankfully doesn't evade a physical shaming at Tyrion's hands once again — as does Sansa, who is nearly raped by a trio of rioters. Her life is saved by the Hound, who finally gets his long-awaited Terminator moment when he guts one of the would-be rapists and kills the other two in equally merciless fashion. One of the best characters in the books, Sandor Clegane hasn't had much to do on the show so far. Perhaps this is the beginning of bold new things for the most feared burn victim in the Seven Kingdoms.

Kissed by Fire

It wasn't all doom and gloom on "Thrones" this week. Finally, Jon Snow has met his match in Ygritte, a wilding warrior woman who is more than prepared to meet her maker should the worst come to pass. Of course, she also values her life greatly and isn't afraid to make some moves on Jon to keep herself safe. That's not great news for Jon; as a man of the Night's Watch, Lord Snow isn't allowed to take women into his bed. Then again, he's a teenager and, well, you know — hormones and all that. Perhaps what happens north of the Wall stays north of the Wall?

Where Are My Dragons?

All the way east in Qarth, Dany is unsuccessful in recruiting the city's leaders to her cause to sail to Westeros and claim the Iron Throne. Worse, when the khaleesi returns to her quarters

after her failed attempt to secure a fleet, she finds many members of her khalasar — beloved handmaiden Irri included — dead, with her dragons missing to boot. None of this happens in the books. I'm guessing it's a dramatic new way to get Dany to the House of the Undying, where she'll experience her fair share of life-altering events. But it's an unnecessary departure that, A) kills even more of the characters in Dany's story despite their survival in the books, further complicating the butterfly effect the show will have to deal with as it gets deeper into Martin's mythology, and B) cheapens Dany's character by stealing her dragons right out from under her. Just as she says, Dany is a strong and fierce fighter fueled by fire and blood. She is the mother of dragons. There is no world in which Dany's dragons are taken from her without her losing her life in the process. I don't like what the show's decision to steal Dany's dragons away from her says about the character, but maybe that's just me. What say you, readers of "Ice and Fire": Are you as bothered by the new changes to Dany's story as I am, or are you not sweating it? Hit us up in the comments below and let us know!

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What did you think of this week's "Game of Thrones" episode? Tell us in the comments section!

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