

The Beginning of the End: GoT Season 8 Premieres in New York City

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It was a red carpet premiere as epic as the show that inspired it. Cast members from every season attended the screening of the first episode of *Game of Thrones*' final season at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. "It's like a high school reunion," laughed *Thrones* alum Pedro Pascal (Oberyn Martell).

The cast was emotional as they approached the beginning of the end after nearly a decade of *Game of Thrones*. Dragon Queen Emilia Clarke (Daenerys Targaryen) called the night, "really exciting and wonderful, but also incredibly sad." The actors had similar feelings while reading the final scripts. Nathalie Emmanuel (Missandei) shared that she finished reading on a plane, crying next to a complete stranger. "If only he knew!" she exclaimed. "Usually when you finish a script it says 'End of Script 3' or whatever," explained Hannah Murray (Gilly), "but this time it said, 'End of *Game of Thrones*.' It was a real punch to the gut."

Sophie Turner (Sansa Stark) had a similar reaction after finishing the finale script: "I went numb and walked around for hours and hours," Turner recalled. "I've cried over it, but I don't think I've fully processed it." Peter Dinklage (Tyrion Lannister) offered that he was, "completely devastated" upon completing reading. "It took me a while to recover, and then once I did, I realized there was no other way to tell this story. It's completely stunning... I think fans are going to take away many different things, and how you see it depends on who you've been siding with."

The night was long-awaited for the cast, who have been avoiding final season spoilers for over two years. Liam Cunningham (Davos Seaworth) agreed he would be happy not to have to keep "these bloody secrets again" but he will miss plenty of other aspects to the series: "Beautiful writing and fantastic storytelling is what it's all about; everything else is a bonus."

The characters are, and have always been, central to the success of *Game of Thrones*. "It's rare to play a character that's a real fan favorite like that," said Maisie Williams of Arya Stark. "I'm going to miss Sansa's resilience," voiced Turner. "No matter what she's put through, she always comes back from it. It inspires me."

The carpet was also graced by some original cast favorites. Charles Dance (Tywin Lannister) admitted he loved Tyrion as a character and hoped he'd end up winning the game. Mark Addy (Robert Baratheon) playfully said he should "probably be rooting for Gendry" but he too would love to see Tyrion on the throne. Jonathan Pryce (The High Sparrow) voted for Cersei to rule. "Despite everything I did to her, I'm very fond of Cersei, of Lena Headey," Pryce shared. "She deserves a break."

"I was there in the beginning and it was our job to establish what this show is," Addy said. "We were setting things up for the people who came after us to inhabit that world." Sean Bean, whose character Ned Stark was beloved by fans and characters alike, agreed, but shared he wished he could have somehow been a part of the Red Wedding. "I would have liked to have been part of that. That was bold and phenomenal — just like the show itself."

Author George R.R. Martin, the man who truly started it all, reflected, "It's been an amazing ride. I never could have anticipated this."

"*Game of Thrones* changed people's perspectives of the fantasy genre, I think," concluded Kit Harington (Jon Snow) when asked how he hoped the series would be remembered. "We came along at a time when television was changing, and [series co-creators] David [Benioff] and Dan [Weiss] and HBO realized the ambition." John Bradley (Samwell Tarly) echoed this sentiment: "It changed the game. It was a whole new level of ambition for what television can be."

For those who will be sad to see the series end, rewatching is always an option. Rory McCann (Sandor "The Hound" Clegane) plans to finally sit down and watch all of the episodes. "I'm in a great position!" he said, "I've got like 60 hours to watch. I can watch it relaxed." And now that the premiere is finally here, he'll have the time for his watch to begin.

The final season of Game of Thrones premieres April 14 at 9 PM.



📍 RED CARPET, SEASON 8, KIT HARINGTON, EMILIA CLARKE, MAISIE WILLIAMS, SOPHIE TURNER, PREMIERE, BUZZ, INSIDE THE SERIES

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