

GOT Notes

Questions about Power - <https://www.shmoop.com/game-of-thrones-book/power-theme.html>

Where does power come from? And what do people do with it?

Here's the bottom line: in A Game of Thrones, power isn't anything close to absolute. Power is continually shifting and changing, and even when you've got it, there's always someone else who's ready to snatch it from you.

Does A Game of Thrones say anything about power and its connection to morality? Is all power immoral? Or is it possible to use power for good?

Are there any forms of power that the powerless have? Think about Arya, Sansa, Bran or Rickon: children have less obvious power in this book, but do they hold any power over others?

We've talked about some types of power – political, military, supernatural – but what other types are there? What about the law? Or social custom?

Who is the most powerful character in this book and why? How does power make you feel about this character?

Who won the Game of Thrones — and why it matters — explained - <https://www.vox.com/culture/2019/5/19/18630083/game-of-thrones-series-finale-the-iron-throne-spoilers-iron-throne-who-won>

Now, my personal preference was always “Tyrion invents democracy” as a way to wrap up this series, and he sort of did that, proposing that the lords and ladies of the great houses of the Seven Kingdoms choose all future rulers. Still, the very idea of Bran ending up as king is a bit ridiculous. But maybe that’s the point. Everyone chuckles at the very notion of a democracy that allows everybody in the Seven Kingdoms a vote when Sam Tarly proposes it. Maybe the Seven Kingdoms need to struggle along in monarchy for a while longer, and if they do, well, why not have an all-seeing demigod on the throne to flatly intone about tax policies and land usage? Long live the king!

The Politics of Game of Thrones - <https://www.cato.org/events/politics-game-of-thrones>

Ice and fire: what Game of Thrones can teach us about power politics - <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/aug/29/game-of-thrones-hbo-cato-institute-politics>

“There’s a lot of talk about breaking the wheel but there’s really little analysis of what the wheel is made of, what it would take to break it, and what you build in its place,” said Rosenberg.

Somin agreed. “It seems like Daenerys’s thinking about what that system will be like hasn’t progressed beyond: ‘I will be on the throne and I will not be a bad person like my father was, like Cersei is, like these other people are.’”

But he felt that our own world was not immune to that sort of thinking. “You can see it even today in liberal-democratic societies where candidates promise us things like ‘I will bring change you can believe in,’ or ‘You give me power, I only can do it, I’ll solve your problems.’ That’s a better and easier campaign strategy than ‘I will build some good institutions’ ... That doesn’t fit into your 30-second ad very well.”

- Duke U: Lessons from Game of Thrones - <https://today.duke.edu/node/130696>
- What ‘Game Of Thrones’ Has To Teach Us About Real-Life Power Conflicts - <https://thefederalist.com/2019/04/16/game-thrones-teach-us-real-life-power-conflicts/>
- John Doyle: Game of Thrones is about brutal power, not conventional politics - <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/john-doyle-game-of-thrones-is-about-brutal-power-not-coventional-politics/article35691677/>
- Game of Thrones: Power and Politics in Medieval and Renaissance Europe - <https://courses.unh.edu/class/201750/56612>
- Lessons from Westeros: Gender and power in Game of Thrones - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0263395715612101>

Power illustrated through Game of Thrones, how it corrupts, and how it hurts the innocent.

Season 1

- Child Bran pushed out of window to protect a secret
- Daenerys sold to Khal Drogo in return for his soldiers
- King Robert orders assassins to be sent to kill Daenerys and her unborn child (valid claim to the Iron Throne). (Ned Stark refuses and resigns.)
- The Mountain (Gregor Clegane) kills innocents in the countryside (Ned Stark orders him arrested)

Season 2

- King Joffrey publicly abuses Sansa (his Betrothed) for her brother’s actions
- Theon kills two innocent children in place of Bran and Rickon Stark
- Craster’s wives? Sons?

Season 3

-Gendry is taken into custody by Stannis and Melisandre

-The Red Wedding (soldiers were told they were guests under Hospitality; slaughtered instead)

Season 4

-Slavers of Meereen have crucified children as a message to Daenerys Targaryen and her army as they approach

-Drogon (dragon) kills a local child; Viserion and Rhaegal are chained because of this

-Wildlings attack the Wall out of desperation; they are repelled.

Season 5

-Ramsay rapes Sansa

-Shireen (Stannis's daughter) is burned at the stake by Melisandre

-Selyse (Stannis's wife) hangs herself after Shireen is killed

-Princess Myrcella is poisoned by Ellaria Sand

-Jon Snow murdered by his own troops for being inclusive and ignoring tradition

-Ramsay Bolton murders Roose's wife Walda and her newborn son

-Hodor is sacrificed to the Wights so that Bran can escape. It is revealed that he is mentally disabled in the past due to Bran's actions now.

-Cersei destroys the Sept of Baelor to avoid her own trial (plenty of innocents were in attendance)

-As a result of this, King Tommen (her son) commits suicide

Season 7

-None (unless you count soldiers)

Season 8

-Nothing specific comes to mind

<https://reason.com/2019/05/20/game-of-thrones-finale-daenerys-iron-jon/>

Both Jon and Tyrion rebuke this madness, and it's hard not to recognize a kind of libertarian principle in their condemnation. On Reason's pre-finale podcast episode, I referenced C.S. Lewis's famous quote about tyrants, and it's fitting here to reproduce the entire thing:

Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at

some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience. They may be more likely to go to Heaven yet at the same time likelier to make a Hell of earth.