Inside HBO's

GAME OF THRONES

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Preface by
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White Walkers

A BRIEF HISTORY

"Oh, my sweet summer child, what do you know about fear? Fear is for the winter, when the snow falls a hundred feet deep. Fear is for the Long Night... when the White Walkers move through the woods."

—Old Nan

Thousands of years ago, according to legend, a brutal winter and a horrific darkness engulfed the whole of Westeros. This darkness—known as the Long Night—lasted a generation. It was the time of the White Walkers, demonic creatures born from the icy wastelands of the far North. Leading monstrous armies of the dead, the White Walkers waged war against the living, sweeping over villages, holdfasts, and cities, utterly destroying everything in their wake.

Eventually, an alliance of the First Men and the Children of the Forest brought the Long Night to an end. Together, they defeated the White Walkers, driving them back into the uncharted reaches of the far North. To keep them from ever invading again, the peoples of Westeros built the Wall, and they set upon it the Night's Watch. For a millennium, the White Walkers have not been seen, and so they have become more myth than real, a bedtime story to frighten disobedient children. But as disturbing accounts arrive from beyond the Wall, some wonder if the White Walkers have returned . . . and are preparing to strike again.

[ABOVE] *Early concept art, White Walker.* ✧ [OPPOSITE] *The Haunted Forest, where wildlings and worse dwell.* ✧ [PREVIOUS PAGE] *The Wall.* ✧ [PAGE 13] *The rangers venture north.*

> "I am Daenerys Stormborn,
> the blood of Old Valyria.
> I am the dragon's daughter."
> —Daenerys Targaryen

Daenerys Targaryen

An exiled princess and the last of the overthrown Targaryen line, Daenerys spent her entire life far from Westeros, in hiding on the eastern continent of Essos. Timid and innocent at first, she grows into a steely and strong leader after her marriage to the Dothraki horse-lord Khal Drogo, the death of her domineering brother Viserys, and the birth of her dragons—the first in thousands of years. Her mission: reclaim her family's birthright and take back the Iron Throne.

DANIEL MINAHAN (*director, season one*): I love all the characters, but I think my favorite is Daenerys. Her journey is so archetypal—how she's sold into slavery and turns it around and becomes a queen, determined to take back the throne for her family. She's only a girl, so it's interesting to watch how she moves through the world, makes mistakes, and learns really hard lessons because of her own ambition.

D. B. WEISS: To be a young actress and make the journey from frightened young girl to a fantasy Joan of Arc—it wasn't like you could look for someone who had "done this sort of thing before." There are plenty of opportunities for young women to be scared, abused, and terrorized in film and television, but there are virtually no roles that let them step into the fire—literally or otherwise—and come out the other side reborn as a

leader and a warrior with an otherworldly poise and strength. So much was riding on the ability of the actress who played Dany to do just this. For a long time, it seemed like this might be a serious, perhaps insurmountable problem.

DAVID BENIOFF: Our wonderful casting director, Nina Gold, brought Emilia Clarke in to read for the part—I believe Emilia had graduated from drama school a few weeks earlier. Her résumé consisted of a public service commercial and a guest appearance on a British soap I'd never heard of before. Not the CV you're looking for when casting Daenerys Targaryen, First of Her Name.

D. B. WEISS: Then we saw Emilia's first audition on a two-inch laptop window in David's kitchen. She was doing the preamble to her "step into the fire" from Episode 110,

Tyrion Lannister

I was born lucky.

—Tyrion Lannister

The third and youngest child of Tywin Lannister, Tyrion has been scorned, derided, and underestimated all his life due to his being born a dwarf—indeed, he is known far and wide as "The Imp." His intelligence and good humor have helped him weather many hardships, with a little help from wine and whores. Having lived most of his life decidedly outside the Game of Thrones, he becomes an unwitting player when he is falsely accused of murder and put on trial, an event that soon leads to all-out civil war. Then, in the wake of Ned Stark's death, Tyrion is appointed to the office of Hand of the King.

[OPPOSITE] *Peter Dinklage as Tyrion Lannister.* ❖ [NEXT SPREAD LEFT] *Tyrion, armed only with a shield, in his first battle.* ❖ [NEXT SPREAD RIGHT] *Falsely accused of murder, Tyrion admires his view from the sky cell.*

Jon Snow

"The next time we see each other,
we'll talk about your mother."

—Ned Stark to Jon Snow

The bastard son of Ned Stark, Jon was recognized by his father at birth and raised alongside his half brothers and half sisters at Winterfell, where he has always felt like an outsider. He grew up idolizing his father, yearning for the affection and approval Ned was never able to fully give. Jon seems to have found his place in the world with the Night's Watch, where he has become a natural leader and effective warrior when faced with the dangers beyond the Wall.

DESIGNING
THE WALL *AND* CASTLE BLACK

"I just want to stand at the top of the Wall and piss off the edge of the world."

{ Tyrion Lannister }

[above] *Owen Teale as sadistic Night's Watch master-at-arms Alliser Thorne.*

DAVID BENIOFF (*executive producer, writer*): The most important visual effects shot in the first episode is the Wall, which is fitting because the Wall might be the most crucial landmark in all of Westeros. It had to look both realistic and awe-inspiring, and the VFX team did an excellent job.

ADAM McINNES: Our aim with the Wall was to create a structure that was unquestionably built with ice but that also had some trademarks of the human engineering involved to construct it. The south side, where Castle Black resides, would be the business side of things. We'd see remnants of the tracks and outposts that would have been used to haul materials up and maintain it over the centuries. The north side had to be sheer, so that it was inconceivable that anyone or anything could ever scale the Wall, thus providing the perfect defense from the dark forces of the North. To build all of this we began with concept art and the physical construction of Castle Black in its location at Magheramorne quarry.

ROBBIE BOAKE (*locations coordinator*): I remember first reading the season one breakdown and thinking, "Where am I going to find this?" Northern Ireland has many diverse locations, but not many seven-hundred-foot walls. So I was very pleased when I drove [production designer] Gemma Jackson over to Magheramorne, an old limestone quarry about twenty miles north of Belfast, and asked, "What do you think?" There it was! By complete coincidence, it ended up being the safest part of the quarry to build in.

ADAM McINNES: The justification for a more rocky base to the Wall was an engineering need to have solid material as a foundation to the ice, which obviously fits nicely with having a good high physical location to shoot within. The Special Effects team treated the surface of the rock to resemble ice and snow buildup. We then had the entire Castle Black and quarry-wall set scanned to provide the basis of an identical CG model, and extensive digital matte painting was used to finish the shots of the Wall seen in the show.
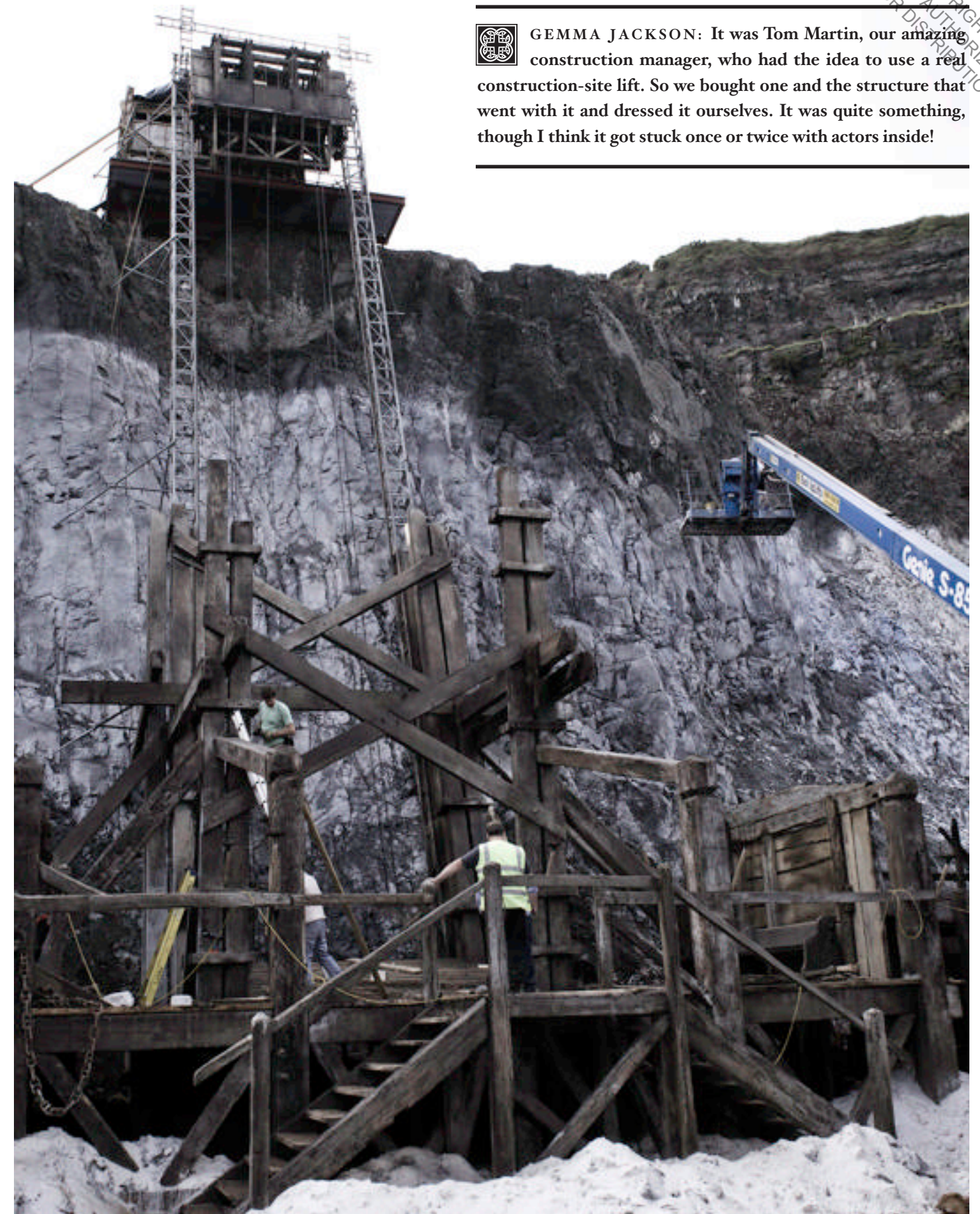
GEMMA JACKSON: It was Tom Martin, our amazing construction manager, who had the idea to use a real construction-site lift. So we bought one and the structure that went with it and dressed it ourselves. It was quite something, though I think it got stuck once or twice with actors inside!

The seed (for the Wall) was planted ten years before I started writing the books, when I visited the UK for the first time and went to Hadrian's Wall. The sun was going down, and I stood on top of the wall, looking north. It was autumn, a chilly day. The wind was blowing, and it awoke something in me.

I tried to imagine what it would be like to be a Roman legionary stationed on that wall, someone from Italy or Africa; they had soldiers from all over the world at that point. You're standing there, essentially at the end of the world, and you could see hills and forests beyond. What enemy is going to come out of those woods? What is going to emerge and attack you from beyond the wall? It was a really profound moment, and it touched something in my imagination. There was a story there. Of course, on Hadrian's Wall, what would have emerged from those woods would be Scotsman! I had to do better than a Scotsman. And fantasy is inevitably bigger, so I knew the Wall had to be bigger.

— **GEORGE R. R. MARTIN**
(executive producer, author of A Song of Ice and Fire*)*