

### \*\*\*Spoiler Alert\*\*\*

*I'm summarizing a character here, so, if you haven't watched all of the GoT episodes (including last night's) LOOK AWAY.*

*If you follow the wildly popular GAME OF THRONES series, you've probably noticed the character Jon Snow. If you're female, and only following the television series (as I am) you might have done a little more than just notice Jon. At this moment I will confess: I have not read the books by George RR Martin. I started the first book, got to a key moment and stopped, realizing I'd rather love the tv series first THEN read the books. So this post will be based entirely on the television series*

**GAME OF THRONES**

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Jon Snow's character on the tv series is older than he's written in the books (just as a note) and this is important—he needs to be old enough to be viewed as sexy by viewers from the get-go and because this is an HBO series it's expected that viewers will be older than tweens and teens.

So let's get to know Jon Snow and why he's a great romantic hero.

### Judging a Book By Its Cover

Let's give some quick credit to the casting department for Game of Thrones. I doubt many people cannot find something attractive about the actor playing Jon Snow (Kit Harington). And, as television is a visual media, we connect more easily with good-looking characters.

### The Powerful Orphan Trope

We empathize with Jon—as the bastard child of Eddard Stark, the ruler of the northern kingdom of Winterfell—he's saddled with the last name of Snow, the name of any man's bastard. Eddard, while at war, became involved with another woman and brought the resulting baby, Jon, back to Winterfell to be raised in his household alongside his legitimate children and by his wife. Jon's father loves him, but Catelyn Stark, Jon's stepmother, can't even bear the sight of him. We know rationally it's not Jon's fault. He is the victim of circumstance. He is truly being dogged by the sins of his father. As an audience, we get that—we've all been denied something we felt we deserved. We've all lost something through (seemingly) no fault of our own. Socially isolated by his stepmother, denied knowing who his real mother is, Jon has no hope of any truly honorable station in life. He's raised among royalty, but denied the perks of it. So close and yet so far,

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Written by Shannon

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right? And at the end of season one—well, Jon becomes a true orphan.

As a result of living with no loving mother and knowing he's denied the potentially posh future of his siblings, Jon could become an embittered outcast.

But he doesn't.

### **Save the Cat—erm, Save the Direwolf—Moment**

We see him demonstrate compassion early on in a classic “save the cat” moment when the family comes across a direwolf's pups. It's suggested they kill them (as the mother is dead and they still need nursing) but Bran (Jon's half-brother) disagrees and Jon backs him up, saying there are five pups, one for each of the Stark children (knowingly excluding himself). Then he finds Ghost, the albino pup who is from the same litter but so very different (can we say “foil”?) and everyone in the family has a pup to match their family crest. He's smart enough to get symbolism and wise enough to use it to save innocent lives.

### **The Trope of the Virgin Hero**

Jon winds up joining the Night's Watch at the wall to the far north of Winterfell, taking a vow of celibacy as part of his initiation. Viewers find out he hasn't been truly/emotionally AND physically intimately involved with anyone and yet he's willing to give up the potential joys of the flesh to protect civilization from the horrors just on the other side of the wall. It's strange, but that seems to make something primitive in us sit up and take notice. He's an outcast, an orphan, a gentle soul, a decent fighter, and he's willing to sacrifice all pleasure to keep others (many simply strangers) safe.

That screams HERO. And throw him into all black? Hawt.

### **The Forbidden Love Trope**

But that's not all. Jon goes beyond the wall into the heart of danger. We recognize his bravery, his willingness to obey commands and, his ability to think on his own and break away when that's the smarter course of action. It's not long before Jon gets pulled into a wildling group and eventually falls in love with Ygritte, a member of the enemy. Holy Romeo and Juliet, right? Loving Ygritte's not easy but Jon falls and falls hard—even breaking his vow of chastity for her. When Jon heads back to help the men of the Night's Watch, Ygritte fills him full of arrows.

But Jon survives, heads back, deals with being subjugated and even openly mocked again by his fellow warriors. He goes on to help defend the wall from attack, taking a leadership role and making some key decisions that aid in the success of holding the wall.

### **Love Denied Trope**

But Ygritte gets inside the wall with a raiding party. She has a moment during which she could kill Jon, but she doesn't. Then their eyes meet, we get the sense there is still hope there for

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romance and, in true GoT style, she gets shot and dies in Jon's arms.

***Jon Snow is a great romantic hero. He comes from a rough background but mostly maintains a hero's outlook. He is willing to sacrifice for others, falls in love, denies love for duty, recognizes love again and then has it torn away from him forever. Who doesn't feel something for him after all that?***