



# A Game of Thrones (A Song of Ice and Fire, Book 1)

By George R. R. Martin

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Long ago, in a time forgotten, a preternatural event threw the seasons out of balance. In a land where summers can last decades and winters a lifetime, trouble is brewing. The cold is returning, and in the frozen wastes to the north of Winterfell, sinister forces are massing beyond the kingdom's protective Wall. To the south, the king's powers are failing—his most trusted adviser dead under mysterious circumstances and his enemies emerging from the shadows of the throne. At the center of the conflict lie the Starks of Winterfell, a family as harsh and unyielding as the frozen land they were born to. Now Lord Eddard Stark is reluctantly summoned to serve as the king's new Hand, an appointment that threatens to sunder not only his family but the kingdom itself.

Sweeping from a harsh land of cold to a summertime kingdom of epicurean plenty, *A Game of Thrones* tells a tale of lords and ladies, soldiers and sorcerers, assassins and bastards, who come together in a time of grim omens. Here an enigmatic band of warriors bear swords of no human metal; a tribe of fierce wildlings carry men off into madness; a cruel young dragon prince barter his sister to win back his throne; a child is lost in the twilight between life and death; and a determined woman undertakes a treacherous journey to protect all she holds dear. Amid plots and counter-plots, tragedy and betrayal, victory and terror, allies and enemies, the fate of the Starks hangs perilously in the balance, as each side endeavors to win that deadliest of conflicts: the game of thrones.

Unparalleled in scope and execution, *A Game of Thrones* is one of those rare reading experiences that catch you up from the opening pages, won't let you go until the end, and leave you yearning for more.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Readers of epic fantasy series are: (1) patient--they are left in suspense between each volume, (2) persistent--they reread or at least review the previous book(s) when a new installment comes out, (3) strong--these 700-page doorstoppers are *heavy*, and (4) mentally agile--they follow a host of characters through a myriad of subplots. In *A Game of Thrones*, the first book of a projected six, George R.R. Martin rewards readers with a vividly real world, well-drawn characters, complex but coherent plotting, and beautifully constructed prose, which *Locus* called "well above the norms of the genre."

Martin's Seven Kingdoms resemble England during the Wars of the Roses, with the Stark and Lannister families standing in for the Yorks and Lancasters. The story of these two families and their struggle to control the Iron Throne dominates the foreground; in the background is a huge, ancient wall marking the northern border, beyond which barbarians, ice vampires, and direwolves menace the south as years-long winter advances. Abroad, a dragon princess lives among horse nomads and dreams of fiery reconquest.

There is much bloodshed, cruelty, and death, but *A Game of Thrones* is nevertheless compelling; it garnered a Nebula nomination and won the 1996 Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel. So, on to *A Clash of Kings*! --  
*Nona Vero*

#### From Publishers Weekly

In a world where the approaching winter will last four decades, kings and queens, knights and renegades struggle for control of a throne. Some fight with sword and mace, others with magic and poison. Beyond the Wall to the north, meanwhile, the Others are preparing their army of the dead to march south as the warmth of summer drains from the land. After more than a decade devoted primarily to TV and screen work, Martin (*The Armageddon Rag*, 1983) makes a triumphant return to high fantasy with this extraordinarily rich new novel, the first of a trilogy. Although conventional in form, the book stands out from similar work by Eddings, Brooks and others by virtue of its superbly developed characters, accomplished prose and sheer bloody-mindedness. Although the romance of chivalry is central to the culture of the Seven Kingdoms, and tournaments, derring-do and handsome knights abound, these trappings merely give cover to dangerous men and women who will stop at nothing to achieve their goals. When Lord Stark of Winterfell, an honest man, comes south to act as the King's chief councilor, no amount of heroism or good intentions can keep the realm under control. It is fascinating to watch Martin's characters mature and grow, particularly Stark's children, who stand at the center of the book. Martin's trophy case is already stuffed with major prizes, including Hugos, Nebulas, Locus Awards and a Bram Stoker. He's probably going to have to add another shelf, at least. Major ad/promo.

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#### From Library Journal

The author of such sf classics as *The Armageddon Rag* (1983) marks the beginning of a new fantasy series about a world where the summer and winter seasons can span generations.

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**Mark Blanding:**

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