

george rr martin ice and fire

George R.R. Martin Ice and Fire: An Epic Fantasy Saga

George R.R. Martin Ice and Fire is more than just a series of books; it is a phenomenon that has captivated readers worldwide, inspiring television adaptations, fan communities, and scholarly discussions. Known for its intricate plots, complex characters, and richly detailed world, the "A Song of Ice and Fire" series by George R.R. Martin has cemented itself as a cornerstone of modern fantasy literature. This article delves into the origins, themes, characters, and impact of the series, providing a comprehensive overview for both new and seasoned fans.

The Origins of George R.R. Martin's Ice and Fire Series

How the Series Began

George R.R. Martin's journey into fantasy writing commenced with his early work in the 1970s and 1980s, but it was in the early 1990s that he conceived the idea for A Song of Ice and Fire. Inspired by historical events such as the Wars of the Roses and medieval politics, Martin aimed to create a gritty, realistic fantasy universe.

Publication Timeline

- A Game of Thrones (1996): The first book introduces readers to Westeros and Essos, setting the stage for the complex political struggles.
- A Clash of Kings (1998)
- A Storm of Swords (2000)
- A Feast for Crows (2005)
- A Dance with Dragons (2011)

Upcoming works and supplementary materials continue to expand the universe, including The Winds of Winter and A Dream of Spring, which remain highly anticipated.

The World of Ice and Fire: Setting and Geography

Westeros and Essos

The series takes place across two main continents:

- Westeros: The land of kings, noble houses, and political intrigue.
- Essos: The vast continent to the east, home to diverse cultures, cities, and mysteries.

Key Locations

- The Seven Kingdoms: The core of Westeros, including King's Landing, Winterfell, and The Eyrie.
- The Wall: A massive ice structure guarding the realm from threats beyond.

- Qarth, Braavos, and Meereen: Prominent cities in Essos with significant roles in the story.

Map and Topography

Martin's detailed maps contribute to the immersive experience, allowing readers to visualize the complex geopolitical landscape.

Major Themes in George R.R. Martin Ice and Fire

Power and Politics

- The series explores the corrupting influence of power.
- Intrigue, betrayal, and alliances shape the narrative.

Honor and Morality

- Characters grapple with moral dilemmas.
- The concept of honor is often contrasted with pragmatic survival.

War and Peace

- The devastating consequences of conflict.
- The cyclical nature of violence and reconciliation.

Myth and Reality

- Dragons, magic, and prophecy intertwine with political machinations.
- The series blurs the lines between fantasy and realism.

Iconic Characters and Their Journeys

House Stark

- Eddard Stark: The honorable Lord of Winterfell.
- Sansa Stark: Navigates court politics and personal growth.
- Arya Stark: Seeks independence and identity.

House Lannister

- Tywin Lannister: Ruthless patriarch.
- Cersei Lannister: Ambitious and cunning.
- Jaime Lannister: The Kingslayer, torn between loyalty and morality.

Daenerys Targaryen

- The last surviving Targaryen, aspiring to reclaim her throne.
- Develops from a timid girl to a powerful leader.

Other Notable Characters

- Jon Snow: The Stark bastard with a significant destiny.
- Bran Stark: The young boy with mystical abilities.
- The Night King: The mysterious leader of the White Walkers.

The Impact of George R.R. Martin's Ice and Fire

Literary Influence

- Revolutionized modern fantasy with its mature themes.
- Inspired numerous authors and works.

Television Adaptation

- Game of Thrones (2011-2019): The HBO series brought global fame, though it diverged from the books in later seasons.
- The show's success boosted book sales and fan engagement.

Cultural Phenomenon

- Fandoms, fan theories, and conventions.
- Artistic expressions like fan fiction, artwork, and cosplay.

Critical Reception

- Praised for its complexity, realism, and unpredictability.
- Criticized for delays in publication of upcoming books.

Future of the Series and Related Works

The Winds of Winter and A Dream of Spring

- The Winds of Winter is expected to continue the story, with updates from George R.R. Martin.
- Fans eagerly await its release, speculating on plot developments.

Additional Materials

- Fire & Blood: A history of House Targaryen.
- The World of Ice & Fire: A comprehensive lore book.

Why George R.R. Martin Ice and Fire Continues to Captivate

Rich, Layered Storytelling

Martin's narrative weaves multiple storylines with intricate character development, keeping readers engaged.

Realism in Fantasy

The series's gritty portrayal of political machinations and human flaws sets it apart from traditional fantasy.

Complex Characters

Characters evolve, making moral choices that reflect real human dilemmas.

Unpredictability

Plot twists and character deaths defy conventions, creating suspense.

Conclusion

George R.R. Martin's Ice and Fire series has established itself as a monumental work within the fantasy genre. Its combination of political intrigue, complex characters, and a richly detailed universe continues to enthrall fans around the world. As the series approaches its conclusion, anticipation grows for the final books that will bring closure to this epic saga. Whether through the books or the acclaimed television adaptation, the legacy of George R.R. Martin's Ice and Fire endures, inspiring new generations of readers and storytellers alike.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main plot of George R.R. Martin's 'A Song of Ice and Fire' series?

The series centers around the struggle for power among noble families in the fictional continents of Westeros and Essos, featuring complex political intrigue, battles, and the threat of supernatural forces like the White Walkers and the Night King.

How many books are planned in George R.R. Martin's 'A Song of Ice and Fire' series?

As of now, Martin has published five books, with two more planned to complete the series: 'The Winds of Winter' and 'A Dream of Spring'.

What are the main themes explored in 'A Song of Ice and Fire'?

The series explores themes such as power, loyalty, betrayal, morality, the corrupting influence of ambition, and the clash between science and magic.

How does George R.R. Martin's series differ from the 'Game of Thrones' TV adaptation?

While the TV series follows the main plotlines, it diverges from the books in numerous character arcs and events, especially as it catches up to the unpublished books, leading to differences in story development and endings.

Who are some of the most iconic characters in 'A Song of Ice and Fire'?

Some iconic characters include Jon Snow, Daenerys Targaryen, Tyrion Lannister, Arya Stark, Sansa Stark, and Jaime Lannister.

What role do dragons play in George R.R. Martin's 'Ice and Fire' series?

Dragons are central to Daenerys Targaryen's storyline and symbolize power, magic, and the Targaryen lineage; they also play a significant role in the series' fantasy elements.

Is there a connection between 'A Song of Ice and Fire' and real historical events?

Yes, Martin drew inspiration from real historical events like the Wars of the Roses, which influences the conflicts between noble houses in Westeros.

When is George R.R. Martin expected to release the remaining books in the series?

There is no official release date for 'The Winds of Winter' and 'A Dream of Spring', but fans eagerly await updates from Martin on their progress.

Additional Resources

George R.R. Martin Ice and Fire: Crafting a Medieval Epic for the Modern Age

George R.R. Martin Ice and Fire is more than just a series of fantasy novels; it is a literary phenomenon that has redefined the landscape of modern storytelling. With its intricate plotlines, complex characters, and richly detailed world-building, Martin's saga has captivated millions of readers worldwide and inspired an immensely popular television adaptation. As the author continues to develop the saga's concluding volumes, the impact of his work remains profound, influencing not only literature but also popular culture and the fantasy genre at large.

The Origins of a Medieval Saga

From Humble Beginnings to Literary Phenomenon

George R.R. Martin's journey to creating the A Song of Ice and Fire series was marked by a diverse career in television, short stories, and novels. Born in 1948 in Bayonne, New Jersey, Martin initially gained recognition as a writer of science fiction and horror short stories before pivoting to fantasy. His early works, such as *Fevre Dream* and *The Armageddon Rag*, showcased his ability to craft atmospheric worlds and complex characters, laying the groundwork for his later fantasy series.

In the early 1990s, Martin began working on what would become *A Game of Thrones*, inspired by medieval history, particularly the Wars of the Roses—a series of dynastic conflicts in 15th-century England. These historical influences imbued his fictional continent of Westeros with a gritty realism that distinguished his work from traditional high fantasy, which often favored clear-cut heroes and villains.

The Evolution of the Series

Initially conceived as a trilogy, the series has expanded into an ongoing saga with five published volumes and more anticipated. The titles, in order, are:

- *A Game of Thrones* (1996)
- *A Clash of Kings* (1998)
- *A Storm of Swords* (2000)
- *A Feast for Crows* (2005)
- *A Dance with Dragons* (2011)

Upcoming volumes, *The Winds of Winter* and *A Dream of Spring*, remain eagerly awaited by fans and critics alike. The series' longevity and complexity reflect Martin's meticulous world-building and commitment to narrative depth.

The World of Westeros and Beyond

An Immersive, Multi-Layered Universe

One of Martin's greatest strengths lies in his creation of Westeros and Essos—two continents filled with diverse cultures, histories, languages, and political systems. This universe is notable for its realism, with detailed maps, intricate histories, and a nuanced portrayal of power dynamics.

- Westeros: A continent reminiscent of medieval Europe, divided into several noble houses vying for control of the Iron Throne.
- Essos: An eastern continent with a tapestry of cultures, including the Free Cities, the mysterious Dothraki Sea, and the distant city of Qarth.

The series explores themes like political intrigue, loyalty, betrayal, and the corrupting influence of power. Unlike traditional fantasy, Martin's world does not shy away from violence, moral ambiguity, or the darker facets of human nature.

The Significance of the Wall and the Night's Watch

A key element of the series is the Wall—an enormous ice structure guarding the realms of men from

threats beyond. The Night's Watch, a sworn brotherhood tasked with defending against supernatural dangers, symbolizes duty, sacrifice, and the thin line between civilization and chaos.

Characters That Define a Generation

A Cast of Complex, Flawed Individuals

Martin's characters are layered and morally ambiguous, often defying conventional hero archetypes. Some of the most notable include:

- Eddard (Ned) Stark: The honorable lord of Winterfell whose sense of justice sets him on a tragic path.
- Daenerys Targaryen: The exiled princess who evolves from a vulnerable girl into a formidable leader with dragons.
- Tyrion Lannister: The witty dwarf whose intelligence and resilience challenge societal prejudices.
- Jon Snow: The brooding, morally upright member of the Night's Watch whose true heritage holds key significance.

These characters, among others, undergo profound transformations, driven by their ambitions, fears, and moral dilemmas. Martin's talent lies in making readers empathize with characters who often make morally questionable decisions, adding realism to his fantasy universe.

The Power of Moral Complexity

Unlike traditional epic heroes, Martin's characters are often morally gray. For example, Daenerys's pursuit of justice sometimes leads her to brutal measures; Tyrion's cunning often involves morally ambiguous schemes. This complexity invites readers to ponder questions about power, morality, and the cost of leadership.

Themes and Motifs in Ice and Fire

Political Intrigue and Power Struggles

The series is a masterclass in political strategy, with numerous factions vying for control. The game of thrones involves alliances, betrayals, and espionage, reflecting real-world political machinations.

The Threat Beyond the Wall

The supernatural elements—White Walkers, wights, and giants—represent existential threats that transcend mortal conflicts. Their presence emphasizes themes of unity and the danger of complacency.

The Irony of Fate and Premonition

Prophecies, dreams, and omens play crucial roles, often foreshadowing events that reshape the characters' destinies. These motifs add a mythic quality to the narrative, blending fate with free will.

The Impact of the Series on Popular Culture

Literary Influence and Critical Reception

Ice and Fire has been praised for its sophisticated storytelling, realism, and character development. Critics often cite Martin's refusal to follow formulaic fantasy tropes, instead opting for unpredictability and moral complexity.

The series has garnered numerous awards, including Hugo and Nebula nominations, and has been credited with revitalizing epic fantasy literature.

The HBO Adaptation: Game of Thrones

Perhaps the most significant cultural milestone related to Martin's work is the HBO television adaptation, *Game of Thrones*. Premiering in 2011, the series brought Westeros into the mainstream consciousness, breaking viewership records and spawning merchandise, fan conventions, and scholarly analysis.

While the show eventually diverged from the books—particularly in its later seasons—its success has cemented the series' influence on television storytelling.

Challenges and Future of the Series

The Long Road to The Winds of Winter

Despite its popularity, the series has faced challenges, notably delays in publishing the forthcoming books. Fans anxiously await *The Winds of Winter* and *A Dream of Spring*, which are expected to bring closure to the series' complex narrative arcs.

Martin has cited the difficulty of maintaining consistency and depth over such a sprawling universe, emphasizing his meticulous editing and storytelling process.

The Series' Legacy

Even as the books remain unfinished, the *Ice and Fire* saga's legacy endures, inspiring countless authors, game designers, and filmmakers. It has set new standards for world-building, character complexity, and narrative unpredictability in fantasy literature.

Conclusion: A Saga for the Ages

George R.R. Martin's Ice and Fire epitomizes the power of storytelling to combine historical realism with fantastical elements. Its influence extends beyond literature into popular culture, television, and the collective imagination. As Martin continues to craft the final chapters of his epic, fans and critics alike await eagerly, knowing that the series has already left an indelible mark on the landscape of modern fantasy.

Whether through the political machinations of Westeros, the mystical dragons of Daenerys, or the haunting threat beyond the Wall, Martin's saga invites us to explore the depths of human ambition, morality, and resilience—making it a true epic for the ages.

George Rr Martin Ice And Fire

george rr martin ice and fire: A Game of Thrones (HBO Tie-in Edition) George R. R. Martin, 2011-03-22 NOW THE ACCLAIMED HBO SERIES GAME OF THRONES—THE MASTERPIECE THAT BECAME A CULTURAL PHENOMENON Here is the first book in the landmark series that has redefined imaginative fiction and become a modern masterpiece. A GAME OF THRONES 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 and supernatural forces are massing beyond the kingdom's protective Wall. At the center of the conflict lie the Starks of Winterfell, a family as harsh and unyielding as the land they were born to. Sweeping from a land of brutal cold to a distant summertime kingdom of epicurean plenty, here is a tale of lords and ladies, soldiers and sorcerers, assassins and bastards, who come together in a time of grim omens. Amid plots and counterplots, tragedy and betrayal, victory and terror, the fate of the Starks, their allies, and their enemies hangs perilously in the balance, as each endeavors to win that deadliest of conflicts: the game of thrones. A GAME OF THRONES • A CLASH OF KINGS • A STORM OF SWORDS • A FEAST FOR CROWS • A DANCE WITH DRAGONS

george rr martin ice and fire: A Game of Thrones 4-Book Bundle George R. R. Martin, 2011-03-22 The perfect gift for fans of HBO's Game of Thrones—a boxed set featuring the first four novels! George R. R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire series has become, in many ways, the gold standard for modern epic fantasy. Martin—dubbed the American Tolkien by Time magazine—has created a world that is as rich and vital as any piece of historical fiction, set in an age of knights and chivalry and filled with a plethora of fascinating, multidimensional characters that you love, hate to love, or love to hate as they struggle for control of a divided kingdom. This bundle includes the following novels: A GAME OF THRONES A CLASH OF KINGS A STORM OF SWORDS A FEAST FOR CROWS

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george rr martin ice and fire: George R. R. Martin's A Game of Thrones 5-Book Boxed Set

(Song of Ice and Fire Series) George R. R. Martin, 2012-09-10 For the first time, all five novels in the epic fantasy series that inspired HBO's Game of Thrones are together in one eBook bundle. An immersive entertainment experience unlike any other, A Song of Ice and Fire has earned George R. R. Martin—dubbed “the American Tolkien” by Time magazine—international acclaim and millions of loyal readers. Now this bundle collects the entire monumental cycle in the most convenient format available: A GAME OF THRONES A CLASH OF KINGS A STORM OF SWORDS A FEAST FOR CROWS A DANCE WITH DRAGONS “One of the best series in the history of fantasy.”—Los Angeles Times Winter is coming. Such is the stern motto of House Stark, the northernmost of the fiefdoms that owe allegiance to King Robert Baratheon in far-off King's Landing. There Eddard Stark of Winterfell rules in Robert's name. There his family dwells in peace and comfort: his proud wife, Catelyn; his sons Robb, Brandon, and Rickon; his daughters Sansa and Arya; and his bastard son, Jon Snow. Far to the north, behind the towering Wall, lie savage Wildings and worse—unnatural things relegated to myth during the centuries-long summer, but proving all too real and all too deadly in the turning of the season. Yet a more immediate threat lurks to the south, where Jon Arryn, the Hand of the King, has died under mysterious circumstances. Now Robert is riding north to Winterfell, bringing his queen, the lovely but cold Cersei, his son, the cruel, vainglorious Prince Joffrey, and the queen's brothers Jaime and Tyrion of the powerful and wealthy House Lannister—the first a swordsman without equal, the second a dwarf whose stunted stature belies a brilliant mind. All are heading for Winterfell and a fateful encounter that will change the course of kingdoms. Meanwhile, across the Narrow Sea, Prince Viserys, heir of the fallen House Targaryen, which once ruled all of Westeros, schemes to reclaim the throne with an army of barbarian Dothraki—whose loyalty he will purchase in the only coin left to him: his beautiful yet innocent sister, Daenerys. “Long live George Martin . . . a literary dervish, enthralled by complicated characters and vivid language, and bursting with the wild vision of the very best tale tellers.”—The New York Times

george rr martin ice and fire: The Ice Dragon George R. R. Martin, 2014-10-21 The Ice Dragon is an enchanting tale of courage and sacrifice for young readers and adults by the wildly popular author of the #1 New York Times bestselling Song of Ice and Fire series, George R.R. Martin. Lavish illustrations by acclaimed artist Luis Royo enrich this captivating and heartwarming story of a young girl and her dragon. In the world of A Song of Ice and Fire the ice dragon was a creature of legend and fear, for no man had ever tamed one. When it flew overhead, it left in its wake desolate cold and frozen land. But Adara was not afraid. For Adara was a winter child, born during the worst freeze that anyone, even the Old Ones, could remember. Adara could not remember the first time she had seen the ice dragon. It seemed that it had always been in her life, glimpsed from afar as she played in the frigid snow long after the other children had fled the cold. In her fourth year she touched it, and in her fifth year she rode upon its broad, chilled back for the first time. Then, in her seventh year, on a calm summer day, fiery dragons from the North swooped down upon the peaceful farm that was Adara's home. And only a winter child—and the ice dragon who loved her—could save her world from utter destruction. This new edition of The Ice Dragon is sure to become a collector's item for fans of HBO's megahit Game of Thrones. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

george rr martin ice and fire: A Game of Thrones George R. R. Martin, 2011-03-01 A NEW ORIGINAL SERIES, NOW ON HBO. Here is the first volume in George R. R. Martin's magnificent cycle of novels that includes A Clash of Kings and A Storm of Swords. As a whole, this series comprises a genuine masterpiece of modern fantasy, bringing together the best the genre has to offer. Magic, mystery, intrigue, romance, and adventure fill these pages and transport us to a world unlike any we have ever experienced. Already hailed as a classic, George R. R. Martin's stunning series is destined to stand as one of the great achievements of imaginative fiction. A GAME OF THRONES 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 and supernatural forces are

massing beyond the kingdom's protective Wall. At the center of the conflict lie the Starks of Winterfell, a family as harsh and unyielding as the land they were born to. Sweeping from a land of brutal cold to a distant summertime kingdom of epicurean plenty, here is 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; and a determined woman undertakes the most treacherous of journeys. Amid plots and counterplots, tragedy and betrayal, victory and terror, the fate of the Starks, their allies, and their enemies hangs perilously in the balance, as each endeavors to win that deadliest of conflicts: the game of thrones. From the Paperback edition.

george rr martin ice and fire: A Storm of Swords (Enhanced Edition): Parts 1 & 2 (A Song of Ice and Fire, Book 3) George R.R. Martin, 2016-12-15 Available only on iBooks, this enhanced edition containing parts one and two of A Storm of Swords, is an amazing way to explore the rich world of George R.R. Martin's series.

george rr martin ice and fire: A Storm of Swords: Part 1 Steel and Snow (A Song of Ice and Fire, Book 3) George R.R. Martin, 2011-06-02 HBO's hit series A GAME OF THRONES is based on George R R Martin's internationally bestselling series A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE, the greatest fantasy epic of the modern age. A STORM OF SWORDS: STEEL AND SNOW is the FIRST part of the third volume in the series.

george rr martin ice and fire: A Dance with Dragons George R. R. Martin, 2013-10-29 #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • THE BOOK BEHIND THE FIFTH SEASON OF THE ACCLAIMED HBO SERIES GAME OF THRONES NAMED ONE OF PASTE'S BEST FANTASY BOOKS OF THE DECADE Here is the fifth book in the landmark series that has redefined imaginative fiction and become a modern masterpiece. A DANCE WITH DRAGONS In the aftermath of a colossal battle, Daenerys Targaryen rules with her three dragons as queen of a city built on dust and death. But Daenerys has thousands of enemies, and many have set out to find her. Fleeing from Westeros with a price on his head, Tyrion Lannister, too, is making his way east—with new allies who may not be the ragtag band they seem. And in the frozen north, Jon Snow confronts creatures from beyond the Wall of ice and stone, and powerful foes from within the Night's Watch. In a time of rising restlessness, the tides of destiny and politics lead a grand cast of outlaws and priests, soldiers and skin-changers, nobles and slaves, to the greatest dance of all. A GAME OF THRONES • A CLASH OF KINGS • A STORM OF SWORDS • A FEAST FOR CROWS • A DANCE WITH DRAGONS

george rr martin ice and fire: A Song of Ice and Fire Boxed Set George R. R. Martin, Martin, George R R, 2011-09-27 George R.R. Martin's A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE -- the story so far. The greatest epic work of the modern age is now available in a collectible box set. Now a major Sky Atlantic TV series from HBO, featuring a stellar cast.

george rr martin ice and fire: Fire and Blood George R. R. Martin, 2018-11-20 The thrilling history of the Targaryens comes to life in this masterly work by the author of A Song of Ice and Fire, the inspiration for HBO's Game of Thrones. With all the fire and fury fans have come to expect from internationally bestselling author George R. R. Martin, this is the first volume of the definitive two-part history of the Targaryens in Westeros. Centuries before the events of A Game of Thrones, House Targaryen--the only family of dragonlords to survive the Doom of Valyria--took up residence on Dragonstone. Fire and Blood begins their tale with the legendary Aegon the Conqueror, creator of the Iron Throne, and goes on to recount the generations of Targaryens who fought to hold that iconic seat, all the way up to the civil war that nearly tore their dynasty apart. What really happened during the Dance of the Dragons? Why did it become so deadly to visit Valyria after the Doom? What is the origin of Daenerys's three dragon eggs? These are but a few of the questions answered in this essential chronicle, as related by a learned maester of the Citadel and featuring more than eighty all-new black-and-white illustrations by artist Doug Wheatley. Readers have glimpsed small parts of this narrative in such volumes as The World of Ice & Fire, but now, for the first time, the full tapestry of Targaryen history is revealed. With all the scope and grandeur of Gibbon's The History of

the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, *Fire and Blood* is the ultimate game of thrones, giving readers a whole new appreciation for the dynamic, often bloody, and always fascinating history of Westeros.

george rr martin ice and fire: George R. R. Martin Song of Ice and Fire Audiobook Bundle George R. R. Martin, 2012-03-27 As the Seven Kingdoms face a generation-long winter, the royal Stark family confronts the poisonous plots of the rival Lannisters, the emergence of the Neverborn demons, the arrival of barbarian hordes, and other threats.

george rr martin ice and fire: A Song of Ice and Fire - A Game of Thrones George R R Martin, 2012-12 The complete box set of George R R Martin's internationally bestselling series *A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE*, the greatest fantasy epic of the modern age.

george rr martin ice and fire: A Dance with Dragons (HBO Tie-in Edition): A Song of Ice and Fire: Book Five George R. R. Martin, 2015-03-31 #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • THE BOOK BEHIND THE FIFTH SEASON OF THE ACCLAIMED HBO SERIES *GAME OF THRONES* Don't miss the thrilling sneak peek of George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire: Book Six, The Winds of Winter* Dubbed "the American Tolkien" by Time magazine, George R. R. Martin has earned international acclaim for his monumental cycle of epic fantasy. Now the #1 New York Times bestselling author delivers the fifth book in his landmark series—as both familiar faces and surprising new forces vie for a foothold in a fragmented empire. *A DANCE WITH DRAGONS A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE: BOOK FIVE* In the aftermath of a colossal battle, the future of the Seven Kingdoms hangs in the balance—beset by newly emerging threats from every direction. In the east, Daenerys Targaryen, the last scion of House Targaryen, rules with her three dragons as queen of a city built on dust and death. But Daenerys has thousands of enemies, and many have set out to find her. As they gather, one young man embarks upon his own quest for the queen, with an entirely different goal in mind. Fleeing from Westeros with a price on his head, Tyrion Lannister, too, is making his way to Daenerys. But his newest allies in this quest are not the rag-tag band they seem, and at their heart lies one who could undo Daenerys's claim to Westeros forever. Meanwhile, to the north lies the mammoth Wall of ice and stone—a structure only as strong as those guarding it. There, Jon Snow, 998th Lord Commander of the Night's Watch, will face his greatest challenge. For he has powerful foes not only within the Watch but also beyond, in the land of the creatures of ice. From all corners, bitter conflicts reignite, intimate betrayals are perpetrated, and a grand cast of outlaws and priests, soldiers and skinchangers, nobles and slaves, will face seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Some will fail, others will grow in the strength of darkness. But in a time of rising restlessness, the tides of destiny and politics will lead inevitably to the greatest dance of all. Praise for *A Dance with Dragons* "Filled with vividly rendered set pieces, unexpected turnings, assorted cliffhangers and moments of appalling cruelty, *A Dance with Dragons* is epic fantasy as it should be written: passionate, compelling, convincingly detailed and thoroughly imagined."—The Washington Post "Long live George Martin . . . a literary dervish, enthralled by complicated characters and vivid language, and bursting with the wild vision of the very best tale tellers."—The New York Times "One of the best series in the history of fantasy."—Los Angeles Times

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