



A Clash of Kings (A Song of Ice and Fire, Book 2)

By George R. R. Martin

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THE BOOK BEHIND THE SECOND SEASON OF GAME OF THRONES, AN ORIGINAL SERIES NOW ON HBO.

George R. R. Martin, a writer of unsurpassed vision, power, and imagination, has created a landmark of fantasy fiction. In his widely acclaimed *A Game of Thrones*, he introduced us to an extraordinary world of wonder, intrigue, and adventure. Now, in the eagerly awaited second volume in this epic saga, he once again proves himself a master myth-maker, setting a standard against which all other fantasy novels will be measured for years to come.

Time is out of joint. The summer of peace and plenty, ten years long, is drawing to a close, and the harsh, chill winter approaches like an angry beast. Two great leaders—Lord Eddard Stark and Robert Baratheon—who held sway over an age of enforced peace are dead . . . victims of royal treachery. Now, from the ancient citadel of Dragonstone to the forbidding shores of Winterfell, chaos reigns, as pretenders to the Iron Throne of the Seven Kingdoms prepare to stake their claims through tempest, turmoil, and war.

As a prophecy of doom cuts across the sky—a comet the color of blood and flame—six factions struggle for control of a divided land. Eddard's son Robb has declared himself King in the North. In the south, Joffrey, the heir apparent, rules in name only, victim of the scheming courtiers who teem over King's Landing. Robert's two brothers each seek their own dominion, while a disfavored house turns once more to conquest. And a continent away, an exiled queen, the Mother of Dragons, risks everything to lead her precious brood across a hard hot desert to win back the crown that is rightfully hers.

A Clash of Kings transports us into a magnificent, forgotten land of revelry and revenge, wizardry and warfare. It is a tale in which maidens cavort with madmen, brother plots against brother, and the dead rise to walk in the night. Here a princess masquerades as an orphan boy; a knight of the mind prepares a poison for a treacherous sorceress; and wild men descend from the Mountains of the Moon to ravage the countryside.

Against a backdrop of incest and fratricide, alchemy and murder, the price of glory may be measured in blood. And the spoils of victory may just go to the men and women possessed of the coldest steel . . . and the coldest hearts. For when rulers clash, all of the land feels the tremors.

Audacious, inventive, brilliantly imagined, *A Clash of Kings* is a novel of dazzling beauty and boundless enchantment—a tale of pure excitement you will never forget.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

How does he do it? *George R.R. Martin's* high fantasy weaves a spell sufficient to seduce even those who vowed never to start a doorstopper fantasy series again (the first book--*A Game of Thrones*--runs over 700 pages). *A Clash of Kings* is longer and even more grim, but Martin continues to provide compelling characters in a vividly real world.

The Seven Kingdoms have come apart. Joffrey, Queen Cersei's sadistic son, ascends the Iron Throne following the death of Robert Baratheon, the Usurper, who won it in battle. Queen Cersei's family, the Lannisters, fight to hold it for him. Both the dour Stannis and the charismatic Renly Baratheon, Robert's brothers, also seek the throne. Robb Stark, declared King in the North, battles to avenge his father's execution and retrieve his sister from Joffrey's court. Daenerys, the exiled last heir of the former ruling family, nurtures three dragons and seeks a way home. Meanwhile the Night's Watch, sworn to protect the realm from dangers north of the Wall, dwindle in numbers, even as barbarian forces gather and beings out of legend stalk the Haunted Forest.

Sound complicated? It is, but fine writing makes this a thoroughly satisfying stew of dark magic, complex political intrigue, and horrific bloodshed. --*Nona Vero*

From Publishers Weekly

The second novel of Martin's titanic Song of Ice and Fire saga (*A Game of Thrones*, 1996) begins with Princess Arya Stark fleeing her dead father's capital of King's Landing, disguised as a boy. [...] In between [the beginning and the end], her actions map the further course of a truly epic fantasy set in a world bedecked with 8000 years of history, beset by an imminent winter that will last 10 years and bedazzled by swords and spells wielded to devastating effect by the scrupulous and unscrupulous alike. Standout characters besides Arya include Queen Cersei, so lacking in morals that she becomes almost pitiable; the queen's brother, the relentlessly ingenious dwarf Tyrion Lannister; and Arya's brother, Prince Brandon, crippled except when he runs with the wolves in his dreams. The novel is notable particularly for the lived-in quality of its world, created through abundant detail that dramatically increases narrative length even as it aids suspension of disbelief; for the comparatively modest role of magic (although with one ambitious young woman raising a trio of dragons, that may change in future volumes)... Martin may not rival Tolkien or Robert Jordan, but he ranks with such accomplished medievalists of fantasy as Poul Anderson and Gordon Dickson. Here, he provides a banquet for fantasy lovers with large appetites—and this is only the second course of a repast with no end in sight. Author tour.

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From Library Journal

A war for succession as king of the realm pits brother against brother in a battle of armies and politics. Caught in the struggle are seven noble families whose fortunes and lives depend on how well they play the game of intrigue, blackmail, kidnapping, treachery, and magic. Martin has created a rich world filled with characters whose desires for love and power drive them to extremes of nobility and betrayal. Fans of epic fantasy should appreciate this lavishly detailed sequel to *A Game of Thrones* (Spectra, 1996). Recommended for most fantasy collections.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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