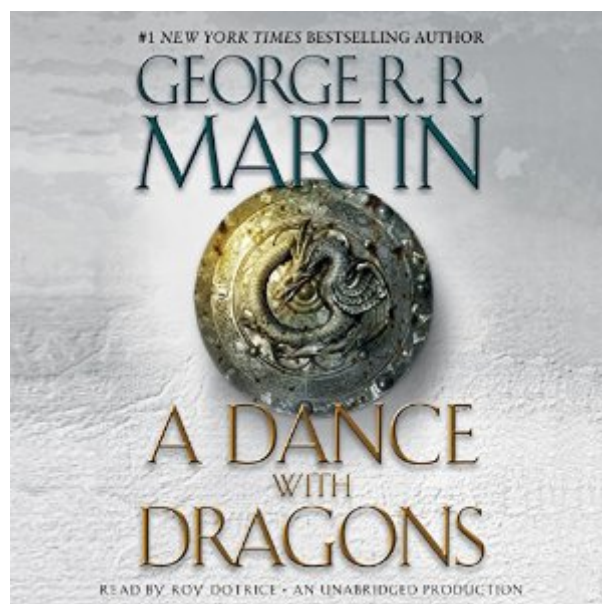


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A Dance With Dragons: A Song Of Ice And Fire: Book 5



Synopsis

Dubbed the American Tolkien by Time magazine, George R. R. Martin has earned international acclaim for his monumental cycle of epic fantasy. Now the number-one New York Times best-selling author delivers the fifth book in his spellbinding landmark series - as both familiar faces and surprising new forces vie for a foothold in a fragmented empire. In the aftermath of a colossal battle, the future of the Seven Kingdoms hangs in the balance once again - 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 three times 3,000 enemies, and many have set out to find her. Yet, as they gather, one young man embarks upon his own quest for the queen, with an entirely different goal in mind. 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 Nights Watch, will face his greatest challenge yet. For he has powerful foes not only within the Watch but also beyond, in the land of the creatures of ice. And from all corners, bitter conflicts soon 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.

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Customer Reviews

SPOILERS AHEAD! I'm Varamyr Sixskins. I'm here for the prologue to set us all up for the impending

horrors of the North and all the excitement to come...I'm Tyrion Lannister, the most popular character in all of Westeros! I spend this book meandering down a really slow river, ruminating bitterly about my life, misplacing my former charm, eroding all the goodwill I built up in the other books, and wondering where the whores go. Though perhaps I should have been wondering where the plot went. I also observe turtles and women, play board games, mouth off to all and sundry, and coincidentally run into various characters like some wandering monster in a D&D campaign. Maybe I'll make it to Daenarys in the next book, but at least I ditched that pig.

I'm Asha Greyjoy. I don't have much to do, so I'll be the POV character keeping track of Stannis and his forces. At the beginning of Dance with Dragons, he's working his way towards Winterfell to take it back from the Boltons. At the end of Dance with Dragons, he's...working his way towards Winterfell to take it back from the Boltons. Hope that helps.

I'm Ser Davon Seaworth, the Onion Knight. I'm still running errands for Stannis and getting captured frequently. It's a living.

I'm Bran Stark. I am a tree.

I'm Daenarys Targaryen. I'm only a young girl, and I know little in the ways of war, governance, what have you. I used to think I said these things to misdirect people, but as of DoD it seems to be true. I spend my time taking baths, fretting, being wishy-washy, and mooning over this hot mercenary dude. In the end I learn that "you have to go back to go forward." I would have thought that going backwards would be the last thing that this book needs, but I am only a young girl and know little of the ways of story advancement.

I'm Aegon Targaryen. I appear for the first time in book five as the long thought dead son of Prince Rhaegar and the rightful heir to the Iron Throne. I know, right? What a surprise! It's like I was just pulled from thin air! I spend much of the book traveling to Daenarys, but then I change my mind and go and invade Westeros without her. Sort of. No one important has noticed yet. See you in the next book!

I'm Griff, aka Jon Connington. I'm here to get Aegon Targaryen on the Iron Throne. I tried to tell that kid not to wait until the fifth book to show up if he wants to be king. Now nobody's invested in us. We're like, peripheral characters or something. Nobody cares. I (*sniff*) just want someone to care, you know?

I'm Theon Greyjoy. Turns out I'm not dead, though I rather wish I were. It's been rough. On the bright side, my chapters were some of the only highlights of this bloated beast of a book. I even got to be almost a hero at the end! Can't wait for the next book. Redemption arc ahoy! People like me now!

Tyrion: Settle down sailor. You're not really a major character, and people still don't like you.

I'm Jaime Lannister. I snuck in to steal a chapter just like I would steal a kiss from my sweet sister. Oh look, there's Brienne! She's not dead after all. Whatever could have happened? Oops, we gotta go now, so I'll guess we'll never know. Blink and you'll miss us!

I'm Ser Robert *cough*Gregor*cough* Strong *cough*not dead*cough*. Gregor SMASH!

I'm the Hound. You know, I strongly suspect that I might not be dead either.

Tyrion: Quiet,

you. No one even mentions you in this book. I'm Wyman Manderly. I'm a minor character, but I bring a bit of awesome anyway. I was last seen bleeding from a neck wound. I wonder if I'll die. Your guess is as good as the author's. I'm John Snow. I command the wall and defend Westeros from the horrors of the North. I count sides of beef and sausages, receive messages, meet with my staff, greet newcomers, and find bedrooms for all the wildings. Seriously, am I a commander or a butler? It's the end of the book already, we need some action! I'll march on Winterfell and retake it from the cursed Boltons! Away we go! Oh, dang it. Stabbed from all sides. There goes that plan. It sure does seem like I'll die now... I'm Quentyn Martell. I'm kind of a side plot that has no impact at all on the main story. Then I die. But the good news is that I really am dead for sure! I'm Melisandre. I get a chapter where I play with fire and see things and act all cryptic with people. Well, I have to amuse myself somehow. It's boorrring at the wall. I'm Victarion Grayjoy. Sailing, sailing, over the bounding main! This book will end before I meet Daenerys Targaryen! I'm Aero Hota. Don't worry, I don't really remember who I am either. Not much to see here, anyway. I'm Cersei Lannister. I get two chapters of humiliation. I can have some of Theon's reader sympathy now? No? Well then. I won't forget this. A Lannister always pays his debts... maybe in the next book. I'm Arya Stark. I'm in two chapters, too, and I kill someone, like I always do. But this time it's different; this time someone told me to. That's progress. Maybe someday I'll kill someone who has something to do with the main story. I'm Barristan Selmy. I putter around Meereen, trying in some small way to advance the plot. Alas, to little avail. I'm too old for this. I'm Kevan Lannister. I waited a thousand pages for a POV and all I got was this lousy epilogue and a quarrel in the chest. Oh well. At least I'm well and truly done with this mess. Varys: Maybe. We're the Others. We are the horror of the North and theoretically the real Big Bad Threat in this series. It's five books in, and we still haven't really gotten to do anything yet. To be honest, we're too bored to bother any more. We're going to invade Canada instead and subdue them to our icy will. Apologies everyone! Hugs and kisses!

Edited: 3/20/2013 (I re-read the book, wanting to give it another chance after watching the very well done television series, but my feelings generally remain the same with some new insights) Warning: I do not give specific story spoilers, but some of my comments can be considered spoilers to the structure of the story. So, to lighten the blow a little first, I will make it clear that I am a fan of the Song of Ice and Fire series. Like many others, I think the first three books were some of the best fantasy books in recent history. They held my interest like few others, took directions many other writers would not dare to take and had me itching to read the next. I'm a fan who checked on the status of this book at least a couple dozen times through each year to see how the progress was

coming and I'm a fan who also believes in a writer taking the time he or she needs to do it properly. While I honestly was a little impatient to read the next book (which is a good thing, unless you're attacking the author over it), I could not fault someone for wanting to do other things with their lives. As far as the positives for *A Dance with Dragons* specifically, Martin continues to show a strong and addicting narrative style with a great attention to detail without going too overboard most of the time. His use of language remains strong with some good character insights and quotes derived from it, and there are a number of moments in the book that were intriguing. These are the reasons why I gave it three stars and if a lesser writer had authored the book, I probably would have never finished it. And before I go into my criticisms of the book, there is something I would like to note. While I often take the side of artists in artistic work, we have to be honest in realizing that the book series is also a commodity. It is not something just written for artistic purposes. When something is put on the market for sale, it is subject to the scrutiny of its consumers. That said, *A Dance with Dragons* (and *A Feast for Crows*) bored me in comparison to the first three books, and while I would like to read how the story ends, I am hesitant to invest more time and money into the book series. I may just be a customer, reader, and fan, so what would I know about editing, story-building, etc., and GRRM may be the professional writer and it went through professional editors, but they still made a cardinal writing error that I so often hear you should not make: They did not keep the story moving. By the end of the book, I felt almost nothing happened. I believe at this point in a book series' life, the story needs to be picking up faster and faster. You need down times of course, and a little exposition in each book to get everyone up to speed again is a good thing...but not through the majority of the book. Things need to happen and you need to have control of the story. I'll give an example. Say you saw a fight at work and you are telling someone about it. You would probably give them a lead up and let them know it was at work between two employees who were not getting along recently, you would probably give them background information like the significant other of one of the employees was cheating with the other employee. You may talk about how another employee that was friends with both revealed that information and hence, betrayed one of those friends. Then, you would describe the fight and its aftermath. What you would probably not talk about is how you stubbed your toe on the way to the car to get to work, the more scenic route that you happened to take that morning, or what you ate at breakfast, lunch, or dinner, or describe in exhausting detail your work duties leading up to the point of the fight. No one cares about these details and you are slowing the story down to a crawl. And say you do all this, even talk about the events related to the actual fight, then you do not actually get to the fight and say, "I'll tell you about the fight next time." Now, imagine that fight being told by seventeen other

people, including people who are near irrelevant to the story. This is what *A Dance with Dragons* felt like to me. The drawn out version of a story with a poorly handled cliffhanger. I really feel that *Feast for Crows* and *Dance with Dragons* are books that maybe shouldn't have been written or at the very least, heavily edited. I could even say that they could have been condensed into one book between 500-700 pages axed between the two of them (and still have time to put in events that could have made them better). I understand that the author originally planned a time skip by five years after *Storm of Swords* and honestly, I felt that would have been better. Between the two books, I just felt very little moved forward in terms of the actual story and they could have easily been left out without hurting the overall story. Of course, there will be many people (probably the majority) disagreeing with me and that is their full right to do so. We're all entitled to our opinions. If you loved *Feast for Crows* and *Dance with Dragons* or just love to soak up everything you can from the story's world, then that's awesome. If you felt you got your money's and time's worth, then that is great. I wish I could have enjoyed them as much as you. I really do. But I didn't. On that note, I hope that *The Winds of Winter* will be a return to form for Martin's writing. However, after the last two books, I know better than to purchase it on day one, and depending on the feedback it gets, I may opt to not purchase it at all and check it out from a library, instead. And I am not entirely sure I will even do that, I'm sad to say.

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