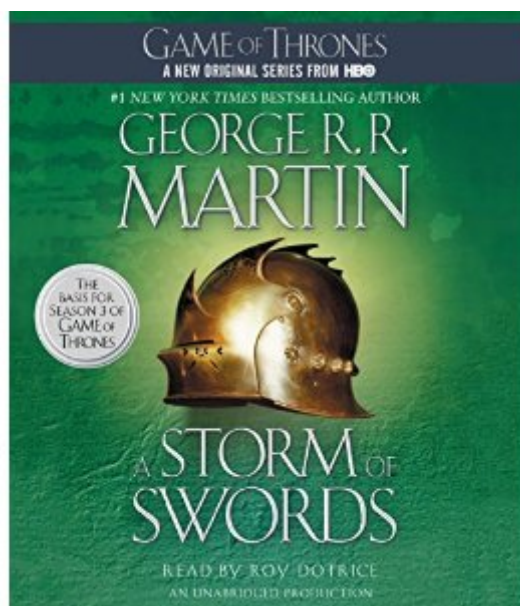


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A Storm Of Swords: A Song Of Ice And Fire, Book 3



Synopsis

THE BOOK BEHIND THE THIRD SEASON OF GAME OF THRONES, AN ORIGINAL SERIES NOW ON HBO. Here is the third volume in George R. R. Martin's magnificent cycle of novels that includes A Game of Thrones and A Clash of Kings. 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 STORM OF SWORDS Of the five contenders for power, one is dead, another in disfavor, and still the wars rage as violently as ever, as alliances are made and broken. Joffrey, of House Lannister, sits on the Iron Throne, the uneasy ruler of the land of the Seven Kingdoms. His most bitter rival, Lord Stannis, stands defeated and disgraced, the victim of the jealous sorceress who holds him in her evil thrall. But young Robb, of House Stark, still rules the North from the fortress of Riverrun. Robb plots against his despised Lannister enemies, even as they hold his sister hostage at King's Landing, the seat of the Iron Throne. Meanwhile, making her way across a blood-drenched continent is the exiled queen, Daenerys, mistress of the only three dragons still left in the world. . . . But as opposing forces maneuver for the final titanic showdown, an army of barbaric wildlings arrives from the outermost line of civilization. In their vanguard is a horde of mythical Others—a supernatural army of the living dead whose animated corpses are unstoppable. As the future of the land hangs in the balance, no one will rest until the Seven Kingdoms have exploded in a veritable storm of swords. . . . From the Trade Paperback edition. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

First off, I'm a heavy duty fan of GRRM. I've read over a 100 different fantasy authors in my time (started at 12; I'm now 32). Took about 5 years off from the genre b/c I felt it was all getting too formulaic and cliched. Typical archetype character who turns out to be the missing heir or boy wonder who saves the world against the Dark Lord. So, when I came back to fantasy at the end of 1999, I read the usual: Goodkind, Jordan, etc. and then someone told me about GRRM and man, that was the kicker! Here are the reasons to choose GRRM. I've also listed the reasons not to choose him to make it fair b/c I know there are certain personalities who won't like this series: **WHY TO READ GRRM** (1) **YOU ARE TIRED OF FORMULAIC FANTASY**: good lad beats the dark lord against impossible odds; boy is the epitome of good; he and all his friends never die even though they go through great dangers . . . the good and noble king; the beautiful princess who falls in love with the commoner boy even though their stations are drastically different . . . the dark lord is very evil and almost one sided at times . . . you get the idea. After reading this over and over, it gets old. (2) **YOU ARE TIRED OF ALL THE HEROES STAYING ALIVE EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE UNDER CONSTANT DANGER**: this gets even worse where the author kills a main hero off but that person comes back later in the story. Or, a hero does die but magic brings him back. This sometimes carries to minor characters where even they may not die, but most fantasy authors like to kill them off to show that some risked the adventure and perished. (3) **YOU ARE A MEDIEVAL HISTORY BUFF**: this story was influenced by the **WARS OF THE ROSES** and **THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR**.

1) This is, BY FAR, the best fantasy I have ever read. Ever. Better than Donaldson, Jordan, Goodkind, Brooks, better than everyone. 2) This is, BY FAR, the best characterization I've ever come across in the fantasy genre. Never in my life have I at so many different times over the course of the three books written been so amazed (Daenerys from the fire, obtaining the Unsullied, choosing between the of two betrayals) stunned (Catelyn, Ser Barristan Selmy) grief-stricken (from deaths of beloved characters, of course only to realize by the end of the next chapter there are so many fantastic characters left). And of course these are just a few examples, there are so many more but don't want to mention at the risk of spoiling new readers. Yes -- amazed, stunned, saddened. I spontaneously and literally yelled, gasped, cried, and cheered while reading these books. Never have I been so emotionally invested in such a large cast of characters. Memories of these books

bring forth emotion in me even now, a month after I read this, his latest book.³) Fabulously intricate plotting. I find it interesting that a common thread in the slightly more negative reviews of this book find Martin a bit ponderous -- that there's so much writing with not a lot of action. This couldn't be further from the truth! Yes, this is high, epic, cruel fantasy of the tallest order. Yes, this is a tall read for younger readers, or those weaned on Jordan, Goodkind, Brooks, etc. But there literally isn't a SINGLE CHAPTER in any of his books where some part of the plot isn't advanced in some way -- spanning over 2000 pages of hardcover text. That's how good the writing is.⁴) Deftly understated magic. I remember reading the first book thinking to myself, 'where's the magic? isn't this supposed to be fantasy?

This series has evolved into a soap opera---a damn good one, but a melodrama nonetheless. Almost every chapter is a cliffhanger, and the ending is geared to keep you hanging in suspense while you wait for the next installment. Shifting and twisting from one character and plot thread to the next, many pass each other like ships in the night, and just when you think they might meet and provide some resolution, they sheer away again, following their own separate adventure, only the general upheaval of the book's background holding the multiple storylines together. This is not a series that appears anywhere near a conclusion, and with the author's ability to continuously create and weave together more and more credible subplots, don't expect an ending to this series any time soon: after all, as the text admits, Daenerys' dragons are years away from being able to be ridden. The title for this installment is not as apt as the previous: no battle occurs equal to the Blackwater, nor do the many opponents---ironmen, wildlings, Targaryen, Baratheon, Stark, or Lannister, let alone the Others---ever come together to meet in a single climatic battle, as the title might imply. Instead, the political conspiracy, betrayal and murder of the previous two books continues to dominate the tale, liberally leavened with slaughter and skirmishes. Players come and go, the plots multiply and thicken, and even what is expected often takes an unanticipated turn. And it is the profusion and complexity of Martin's intrigues that arguably sets this series apart from the other prominent fat fantasists, Terry Goodkind and Robert Jordan. They as well depend upon a profundancy of subplots and scheming to extend and carry their stories, but Martin arguably does it more tightly and with greater relish.

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