

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *A Clash of Kings*
AUTHOR George R.R. Martin
PUBLISHER Bantam
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COVER ART Stephen Youll

Précis The Iron Throne of the Seven Kingdoms is in the tenuous grip of Joffrey, the apparent heir of the late king, but the word is spreading that Joffrey is the son of the queen and her brother. This prompts the brothers of the dead king to make claim to the throne and Robb Stark, the heir of Eddard Stark who was killed right after the king died by the new boy king, has made claim to King of the North.

On another continent, the female heir to the family that was king until the recently dead king usurped it is planning to retake the throne with the help of the only three dragons known to exist. This struggle is what drives the story and along the way the large cast of characters fights to hold on, conquer and take revenge for past wrongs. The story ends with the major battle for King's Landing and the changes it brings.

Protagonist Tyrion Lannister
Antagonist Cersei Lannister

What I liked The continuing depth of the characters, the increased depth of the story and the way Martin describes the battles and the action. He is so good at using just the right word. The pacing is so good you never feel the story drag. The fact that he helps keep all the characters straight without being too repetitious is also well done.

What I didn't like The main thing I had a problem with was the overuse of the trick of killing off a character and then revealing that they weren't *really* killed. Once is fine but two or three times is annoying. I understand it adds to the story but after a while I found myself thinking, are they really dead.

Final Comments This book was every bit as good as *A Game of Thrones*. While the ending didn't blow me away as much as the first book, the storytelling is solid and moves the saga along well. I would like to have seen a few more loose ends cleaned up but I will have to wait until I read the next installment for that. I have been spoiled by Martin on this series as I am even more critical of bland writing. That's not a bad thing though.

Rating 🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌