

## SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE            *A Game of Thrones*  
AUTHOR        George R.R. Martin  
PUBLISHER     Bantam Spectra  
COPYRIGHT    1996  
PRINTING      1996  
COVER ART     Tom Hallman

**Précis**            The king's hand dies by unusual circumstances and a Stark from the North is chosen to be the new Hand. He reluctantly accepts, which means leaving his family at Winterfell at a time when things north of the Wall are starting to become ominous.

Shortly after they arrive back at King's Landing - the capital city - the intrigue begins as Ned Stark finds forces at work to usurp the throne. In an unfortunate accident, the king is mortally wounded by a boar while hunting and his young son is to be the new king. Except that the son is not really his and Ned knows this. This sets up a chain of events where Ned is removed as Hand and branded a traitor, the Lannisters - the house of the Queen - make their move to control the empire and Ned's son is forced to gather the other houses into battle to save his father.

The boy king turns out to be ruthless beyond expectation, and to complicate things further he is betrothed to Ned's oldest daughter Sansa.

Side stories involving the old dynasty house Targaryens, Tyrion - the imp brother of Jaime Lannister, and others abound in this sweeping novel.

**Protagonist** - Ned Stark

**Antagonist** - Jaime Lannister

Note - these are the main ones but many others play into this and a case could be made for others to be chosen but I felt these were the two that most belonged in these roles.

**What I liked** - The simple answer is everything. I really loved this book. What I liked most were the rich characters and the complex but easy to follow plot. The language is also very medieval and lends a great deal of feeling to the story. The battle descriptions are excellent and the pace is riveting.

**What I didn't like** - I didn't like what happened to Ned Stark, but I understand the need for it. And the food descriptions kept making my hungry!

**Comments** - I don't read many fantasy novels but if more were like this, my sci-fi books might collect a little more dust. Martin writes with a vengeance and even though the book is a tad over 700 pages it reads shorter. The last page of the book blew me away! I did not see it coming until I read the first paragraph and I still get a chill when I think of it. Martin also got me to like Tyrion the imp even with his faults. This is the first of the *Song of Ice and Fire* series and I will be reading the next three very soon. The fifth and final (so the rumors go) is not published yet.

**Rating** 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟