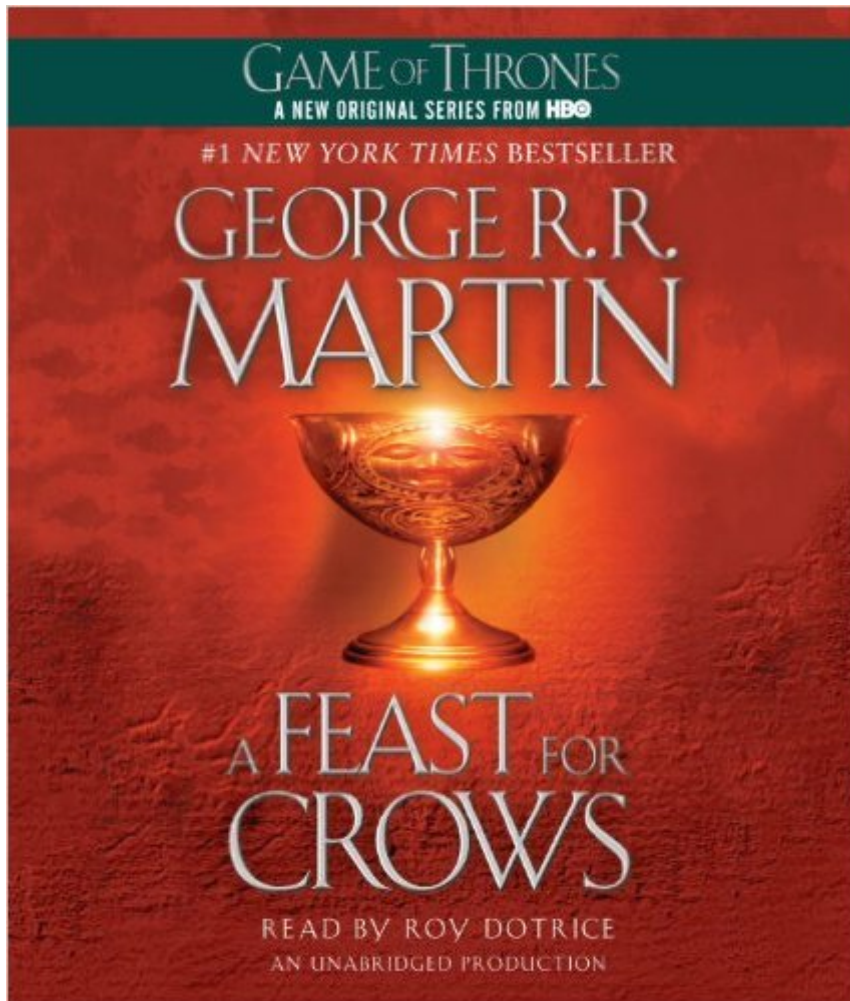


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A Feast For Crows: A Song Of Ice And Fire: Book Four



Synopsis

THE BOOK BEHIND THE FOURTH SEASON OF THE ACCLAIMED HBO SERIES GAME OF THRONES

Few books have captivated the imagination and won the devotion and praise of readers and critics everywhere as has George R. R. Martin's monumental epic cycle of high fantasy that began with *A Game of Thrones*. Now, in *A Feast for Crows*, Martin delivers the long-awaited fourth book of his landmark series, as a kingdom torn asunder finds itself at last on the brink of peace . . . only to be launched on an even more terrifying course of destruction.

A Feast for Crows It seems too good to be true. After centuries of bitter strife and fatal treachery, the seven powers dividing the land have decimated one another into an uneasy truce. Or so it appears. . . . With the death of the monstrous King Joffrey, Cersei is ruling as regent in King's Landing. Robb Stark's demise has broken the back of the Northern rebels, and his siblings are scattered throughout the kingdom like seeds on barren soil. Few legitimate claims to the once desperately sought Iron Throne still exist—or they are held in hands too weak or too distant to wield them effectively. The war, which raged out of control for so long, has burned itself out. But as in the aftermath of any climactic struggle, it is not long before the survivors, outlaws, renegades, and carrion eaters start to gather, picking over the bones of the dead and fighting for the spoils of the soon-to-be dead. Now in the Seven Kingdoms, as the human crows assemble over a banquet of ashes, daring new plots and dangerous new alliances are formed, while surprising faces—some familiar, others only just appearing—are seen emerging from an ominous twilight of past struggles and chaos to take up the challenges ahead. It is a time when the wise and the ambitious, the deceitful and the strong will acquire the skills, the power, and the magic to survive the stark and terrible times that lie before them. It is a time for nobles and commoners, soldiers and sorcerers, assassins and sages to come together and stake their fortunes . . . and their lives. For at a feast for crows, many are the guests—but only a few are the survivors.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

OK, I did something a little different in this review. Soon there will be literally hundreds of reviews for this book, all giving similar reasons why people like or dislike *A Feast For Crows*. Instead of adding, and probably losing, my voice in amongst the clamour, I've done a bit of mathematics for you. I actually went through the book and noted which characters had chapters of their own and how many pages each of those chapters had, then I figured the numbers out as percentages (yes, I know, I need to get out more). So now, for your literary edification and illumination, I present to you a list of what actually happens in the book, according to my calculations (all rounded off). CERSEI: 22.5%. That's right, folks, the Lannister Queen has more than one page in five, and nearly one page in four, devoted entirely to her point of view. If you've always wanted to know what goes on in her scheming little mind, then boy, do we have a show for you! Considering that there are thirteen people altogether who get chapter viewpoints of their own, Cersei's 22.5% share means that, on average, everyone else only gets 6.5% each. You could say that Cersei has the lion's share (terrible pun, I know). BRIENNE: 17.5%. Next on our little list comes the Maid of Tarth. Most of the time we spend with her is on character development, rather than juicy action. Not that there's anything wrong with that at all, but you've been warned. If you were expecting her to become Lara Croft: Tomb Raider reborn, think again. Also, of some small statistical note, more than 60% of the pages in this book are devoted to the female character's points of view. Just so you know. JAIME: 15.5%.

It's doubtful that any sort of review will stop someone who has read the first three books from reading this long-awaited and justly anticipated instalment. Nevertheless, I'd like to voice an opinion which falls between the extremes which seem to be the most prevalent sort of responses to this book. Mr Martin is a great fantasy writer, and I don't think that has changed. However, *A Feast For Crows* is not up to the standard of this first three in the series. What I suspect HAS changed is the commercial pressure that has been placed on Mr Martin, combined with (I hate to say it) a growing over-indulgence which has been allowed him. When George Martin defends the delays, longer-than-expected lengths, and the seemingly extraneous side-stories, he is fond of referring to

Tolkien by saying that "the story writes itself" (or something like that). I don't doubt that Martin experiences this "divine inspiration" like many other great artists, but this time around he seems to have been unable (or more likely, unwilling) to step away from that feeling to undergo the painful process of editing. When the pressure to make a release led to a cutting in half of the anticipated book, thus allowing two books of about 700 pages rather than one of about, say, 1000, it seems that Martin took it as a cue to go easy on the editing. The splitting of the book is itself substantially detrimental, but Martin's lack of self-criticism is the real reason why this book is somewhat disappointing. Not everything created by the divine inspiration of great artists is great art. People who are claiming that there is no plot development, either within the book or for the series, are of course exaggerating.

I have to say this book was a disappointment. The first three books in this series were unquestionably 5-star reading. *A Feast for Crows*, however, truly was -- as one reviewer described it -- a chore to get through. I wondered often as I read it whether Martin would have fared better to collapse this book and the sequel, *A Dance with Dragons*, into one volume after all. The argument that the book would have then been too long doesn't wash with me since many of the chapters here -- far too many -- felt like "packing material", the popcorn and bubblewrap that you have to dig through to get to the good stuff that you really wanted and paid for. *A Feast for Crows* would have been a far better book if the dross chapters had been eliminated and the pure gold chapters from the next book added in. Ah, well. Too late for that now. Sadly, in this book, I just got bored. Not only once, but again and again. And I am astounded to say that because Martin is a magnificent writer and storyteller. But I was seriously bored with much of this book. I did not like Martin's departure from the style of previous books of adding so many nameless ("The Prophet", "The Kraken's Daughter", etc.) point-of-view (POV) chapters. Sheesh. Why not just say their names? "Aeron" ... "Asha" ... Worse still, most of these "secondary" POV chapters were quite dull. I did not like these characters and I did not want to invest my time in them because it is not THEIR story I am interested in in this series. Many of these secondary characters are repellent, dull, and/or unpleasant, and each new character's chapter(s) carried the baggage of (seemingly) 50 to 60 new names and characters apiece.

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