Written by Bob Suggs
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Summers span decades. Winters can last a lifetime. And the struggle for the Iron Throne has begun. It will stretch from the south, where heat breeds plots, lusts and intrigues; to the vast and savage eastern lands; and all the way to the frozen north, where an 800-foot wall of ice protects the kingdom from the dark forces that lie beyond. Kings and queens, knights and renegades, liars, lords, and honest men...all will play the Game of Thrones.

Game of Thrones, the first book in author George R.R. Martin's sprawling fantasy saga A Song of Fire and Ice, serves as the basis for this brawny, lusty series about courtly intrigue and civil war in a sprawling fantasy kingdom. TV and fantasy veteran Sean Bean (The Lord of the Rings, Sharpe's Rifles) leads the massive cast as the warrior-noble Eddard Stark, who reluctantly assumes the role as the Hand of the King after the mysterious death of his predecessor. The King, Robert Baratheon, has leadership of the lands of Westeros, a mythical country plagued by severe, decade-long shifts in weather. His rule is challenged by the exiled Prince Viserys Targaryen (Harry Lloyd), who trades his own sister (Emilia Clarke) for the allegiance of the Dothraki, a savage nomadic tribe led by Khal Drogo (Jason Momoa of the 2011 Conan the Barbarian). A shocking secret kept hidden by Queen Cersei Lannister (Lena Headey, 300) leads to an upset in the balance of power and, ultimately, a challenge to the House of Stark to bring control to the bloodshed that threatens to overtake Westeros.

Fantasy has been a tricky genre for television--the scope required to bring the sweep and imagination to life is usually better suited for the big screen. But Game of Thrones neatly sidesteps the issue by virtue of the quality of the production at every level. Though the series is steeped in fantastic elements, from direwolves to dragons, series creators David Benioff (who wrote Troy and The Kite Runner, among others) and author D.B. Weiss (Lucky Wander Boy) have rooted the drama in the emotional landscape of its characters, which brings the end result closer to Benioff's humorous description of the show as "The Sopranos in Middle-Earth." Intricate plotting and direction with an eye for realism by a host of HBO veterans, including Tim Van Patten, Alan Taylor, and Daniel Minahan, underscores that notion, as does its stellar cast, which includes Mark Addy as Headey's husband, King Robert, Iain Glen as the faithful knight Ser Jorah Mormont, and Aiden Gillen (The Wire) as Petyr "Littlefinger" Baelish. However, the proceedings are handily won by Peter Dinklage's Emmy-nominated turn as the cunning Tyrion,

whose intellect is constantly disregarded due to his size. Of course, viewers can also tune in to simply enjoy the more visceral elements of Game of Thrones, which features quite a bit of medieval-style carnage, as well as an at-times unnecessary level of nudity, which feels like a network decision based on the amount of flesh on display in their other successful shows. Regardless, Game of Thrones is an entirely addictive experience for both fantasy and drama fans alike throughout its debut 10 episodes, all of which are featured on this multi-disc set.
--Paul Gaita

Special Features

Making of
15 Character profile clips
Creating the Dothraki language
Inside the Night's Watch
From Book to Screen
Creating the Show Open
7 Audio Commentaries Guide to Westeros

Blu-ray Exclusive Features-
Complete Guide to Westeros
In-Episode Guide
Anatomy of an Episode
Hidden Dragon Eggs

Actors: Sean Bean, Mark Addy, Michelle Fairley, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Lena Headey
Directors: Tim Van Patten, Brian Kirk, Daniel Minahan, Alan Taylor
Format: AC-3, DTS Surround Sound, Dubbed, NTSC, Subtitled, Widescreen
Language: English, French, Spanish
Subtitles: Danish, Dutch, English, French, Norwegian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish
Region: Region 1 (U.S. and Canada only. Read more about DVD formats.)
Aspect Ratio: 1.78:1
Number of discs: 5
Studio: HBO Studios
DVD Release Date: March 6, 2012
Run Time: 561 minutes

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