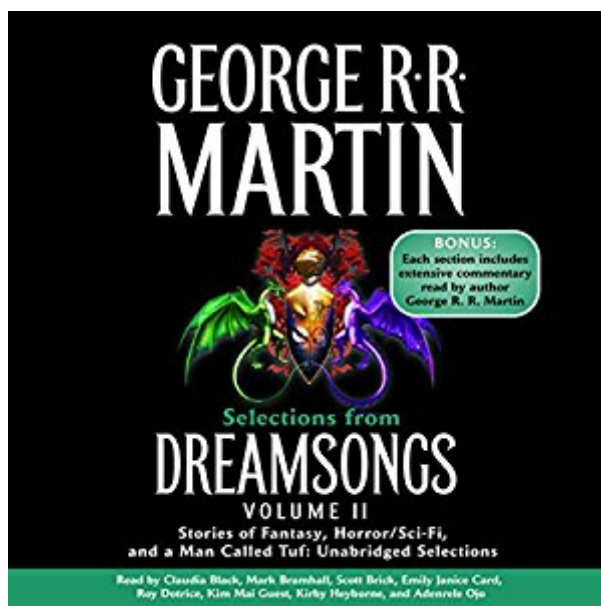


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Dreamsongs, Volume II (Unabridged Selections)



Synopsis

Even before the enormous success of *A Game of Thrones*, George R. R. Martin had secured his reputation as one of the most exciting storytellers of our time. The second of two thrilling collections, *Dreamsongs: Volume II* continues the story of his amazing journey from a young writer to a #1 New York Times bestselling force of nature. Whether writing about werewolves, wizards, or outer space, George R. R. Martin is renowned for his versatility and expansive talent, as demonstrated in this dazzling collection. *Dreamsongs: Volume II* contains acclaimed stories such as the World Fantasy Award winner "The Skin Trade," as well as the first novella in the Ice and Fire universe, *The Hedge Knight*, plus two early screenplays. Featuring extensive author commentary, *Dreamsongs: Volume II* is an invaluable chronicle of a writer at the height of his creativity and an unforgettable reading experience for fans old and new. "Science fiction, fantasy and horror fans alike will be blown away by the diversity and quality of stories. . . . This extraordinary collection is one to cherish." *Publishers Weekly* (starred review) "Dreamsongs is the ideal way to discover . . . a master of science fiction, fantasy and horror. . . . Martin is a writer like no other." *The Guardian* (U.K.) PRAISE FOR GEORGE R. R. MARTIN "Of those who work in the grand epic-fantasy tradition, Martin is by far the best. In fact . . . this is as good a time as any to proclaim him the American Tolkien." *Time* "Long live George Martin . . . a literary dervish, enthralled by complicated characters and vivid language, and bursting with the wild vision of the very best tale tellers." *The New York Times* "I always expect the best from George R. R. Martin, and he always delivers." *Robert Jordan* --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 17 hours and 15 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Random House Audio

Audible.com Release Date: October 30, 2007

Language: English

ASIN: B000Y4RSAM

Best Sellers Rank: #113 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science Fiction > Anthologies &

Short Stories #1305 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Anthologies](#)
#1521 in [Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Epic](#)

Customer Reviews

The continuation of Martin's short story compendium had less stories I liked as compared to his first, but it also had less stories overall, and the ones I enjoyed were phenomenal. *A Taste of Tuf* introduced me to cat loving protagonist Tuf Haviland who I believe could be an avatar for Martin himself (though GRRM insists he's more like the Turtle of the Wild Card series) in addition to adding more books to my reading list. I entirely skipped over *The Siren Song of Hollywood* after losing interest in the first story. It was okay, but the screenplay style threw me off. *Doing the Wild Card Shuffle* was 50/50. The story I disliked was my least favorite of the entire volume, and in fact hung me up on reading it for about a month, but the story I loved is my favorite in the entire collection. What an appropriate unity of opposites. This section also had me adding books to my reading list. The *Heart in Conflict* section was a nice round out. I wasn't over the moon about any of the stories in it, but there was a draw to them still. Two of them factor greatly into something major recently introduced in the television series. This is not going to be a review of the entire collection, but rather a commentary and brief analysis on the stories that struck a chord. *A Taste of Tuf* "A Beast for Norn" introduced the fore mentioned Tuf who comes off as quite mild mannered, but is no one to trifle with. The "norns" are the names of the fates in Norse Mythology, but the 12 houses in this story seal their own through warmongering and greed. The houses themselves and their respective beasts are surely a precursor to Westeros and its sigils. The second Tuf tale is entitled "Guardians," but the moniker is deceptive for the group that initially bears it. This is also yet another tale that draws me ever to conclusions about Martin's epic *Song*. He's written it before, scattered throughout the decades. *ASOIAF* is merely the culmination of preexisting ideas. At the end of the current saga, I believe we will be left with questions about whether or not humanity is the true protagonist of the tale or rather the authors of their own destruction seen as sympathetic because we ourselves are human, and it's uncomfortable to envision yourself as the villain. I doubt this point will be universally understood though, as it is constantly and consistently missed in numerous narratives across media and genre. *Doing the Wild Card Shuffle* "From the Journal of Xavier Desmond" is such a monumentally excellent story that it entirely changed my point of view on the Wild Card series, prompting me to put that on my to-read list. I was singularly unimpressed with "Shell Games," but "Journal" more than made up for that. The cause and effect put me in the mind of another novel *The Devil's Alphabet*; however, unlike the latter, the source of these changes is both virulent and alien in

nature. It's also impossible to ignore it's similarities to X-Men (hell, the narrator's name's even Xavier...) in this take on racism and discrimination. The mien of the story can best be described as hopeful despondency. It captures the mindset of a dying man desperately trying to do something useful with his final days. The Heart in Conflict If you are a fan of Song and/or Game of Thrones, the most important stories in this section are "Unsound Variations" (which is reviewed here by Vassals of Kingsgrave) and "Under Siege." This only became a known truth with the airing of S6E5 and the heartbreak of "Hold the Door." I won't spoil for those of you who haven't yet seen, but I will say that a causal loop paradigm was presented that changes everything. These two shorts are Martin "practicing" this point for his Song. Both stories are about sending one's consciousness back to a point in the past in order to engender change. Actions have consequences. This, above all I truly believe, is what Martin is trying to show us. I recommend this volume and the previous to any and all fans of GRRM's writing. While some of the stories may not be to your liking, I'm certain you will find something of value within many if not most.

Since I read this as part of my Game of Thrones fix I got hung up in this book near the beginning when he mentions how his career is filled with unfinished series. Seriously, I wanted to cry for a minute. Otherwise I enjoyed it. Not as good as the first but then again my favorite of both books is the Hedge Knight and the introduction of Dunk. Great characters and what is a good look into the history of Ice and Fire. I even enjoyed the descriptions of the joust. I can't wait to read the other two! I also personally enjoyed the Hollywood scripts because I'm interested in screenwriting so I appreciated seeing hate formatting and hearing the behind the scenes of why they didn't work out for him in the end. The stories are good in this one but somewhat lacking in the first. I'm not a big fan of the Tuf series so starting off that way might have colored the book a bit for me. It feels smaller and less expansive for some reason still an enjoyable read though.

Dreamsongs Vol I and II are a must for George Martin fans. The 2 books cover, in chronological order, Martin's career before Song of Ice and Fire. They include his short stories, novellas and even several scripts he wrote for TV shows. The reader can not only see the genesis of many ideas he later incorporated into SOIF but each section begins with Martin talking about what was going on in his life at the time and how the stories came about. Not just a "swords, sorcerers and dragons" guy, Martin was an award-winning sci-fi writer, as well as a popular fantasy and horror writer. Don't just think about buying these compilations....buy them!

If you're a big GRRM fan who is low on cash, get this one, I'd say. The least good stories are the TV pitches, but they're relatively fast reads so you can get through them right quick. This collection made me realize I'm a sucker for Martin's Federal Empire universe (that's what I'm calling it right now), a lovely collection of worlds with utterly diverse stories weaving them together (or not). The Hedge Knight is an atypically earnest and upbeat story set in the Game of Thrones universe, so if its bleakness usually turns you off -- do not worry here, chaps! The Skin Trade is a fun urban fantasy whodunit centered around a serial killer who targets werewolves. Martin says it's a shame he never did anything more with the world, but hey, a good story is a good story.

Almost nothing to do with Game of Thrones...wait! Wait. Keep an open mind. These stories are all over the place theme-wise, but they still have the GRRM style and panache that you (probably) love. Each one is unique and enjoyable in its own way, and while I have a few favorites, there really wasn't a single one that I could call boring. There's less incest and more lasers (on average) than Song of Ice and Fire, but I got used to that about halfway through. Seriously good stuff.

Amazing. A+A+A+A+ Volume 1 is just as great.

I'm a huge fan of GRRM. I enjoy this and the previous Dreamsongs anthology immensely. This is probably less essential than the previous Dreamsongs, since the tuf Havilland, wild cards, and Dunk and egg stories are easily available elsewhere. But I love the essays where GRRM describes the various phases of his career, which in this volume include his experiences in Hollywood and the table-top rpgs that inspired the wild cards series.

I love Dreamsongs: Volume I. This was harder for me, as the majority of the book I struggled feigning interest in the characters put in front of me. With Vol. I, you have a clear case of short stories. If one doesn't float your boat, the next one in a mere few pages might. This volume, however, is an attempt into serials/actual novels. You're stuck with the characters for a lot longer, and if it's not your bag, it's agony to push through. Some of these serials/novel attempts are wonderful. And, naturally, I found the prequel to G.O.T. WONDERFUL!

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