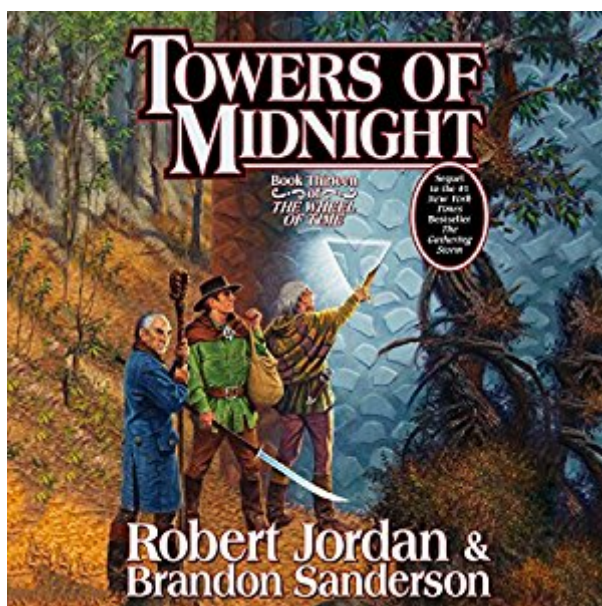


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Towers Of Midnight: Wheel Of Time, Book 13



Synopsis

The Last Battle has started. The seals on the Dark One's prison are crumbling. The Pattern itself is unraveling, and the armies of the Shadow have begun to boil out of the Blight. The sun has begun to set upon the Third Age. Perrin Aybara is now hunted by specters from his past: Whitecloaks, a slayer of wolves, and the responsibilities of leadership. All the while, an unseen foe is slowly pulling a noose tight around his neck. To prevail, he must seek answers in Tel'aran'rhod and find a way - at long last - to master the wolf within him or lose himself to it forever. Meanwhile, Matrim Cauthon prepares for the most difficult challenge of his life. The creatures beyond the stone gateways - the Aelfinn and the Eelfinn - have confused him, taunted him, and left him hanged, his memory stuffed with bits and pieces of other men's lives. He had hoped that his last confrontation with them would be the end of it, but the Wheel weaves as the Wheel wills. The time is coming when he will again have to dance with the Snakes and the Foxes, playing a game that cannot be won. The Tower of Ghenjei awaits, and its secrets will reveal the fate of a friend long lost. This penultimate novel of Robert Jordan's number-one New York Times best-selling series - the second of three based on materials he left behind when he died in 2007 - brings dramatic and compelling developments to many threads in the Pattern. The end draws near. Dovie'andi se tovyá sagain. It's time to toss the dice....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you've been waiting on this series to *finish* for as long as I have, this book is for you. It's the

next-to final volume in Robert Jordan's twenty-years-in-the-making Wheel of Time series, not the ending itself, but -- well, I'll explain below. If you're familiar with the series at all, you know that Jordan passed away before he could finish writing the final volumes, and you know that Brandon Sanderson, an expert writer in his own right, has been brought on to finish the final three books -- *The Gathering Storm*, released last year, this volume, *Towers of Midnight*, and a final volume, *A Memory of Light*, which seems likely to be released around March 2012. Of those three volumes, this is the "Two Towers" equivalent: there's a heck of a lot of action and movement, but ultimately, this book is about things *finally* falling into position for the final confrontations -- if *The Gathering Storm* put the key in the ignition, this one turns it, and now all that's left is to watch the last volume put the pedal to the metal. There's a real sense throughout the book that the many, many characters and plots are all locking into place, falling towards their final intersections. Sanderson's writing is excellent, and in some ways significantly improved since the last volume. Due to the nature of the coauthorship (Jordan wrote some sections of the last three books before he died, and Sanderson is completing the rest from Jordan's extensive outlines and notes), it's hard to know precisely how much we're seeing here of Brandon Sanderson's work and how much of Jordan's, but Sanderson does appear to have a few minor "tells" (chiefly, a tendency towards more modern diction and phrasing), and from those I'll venture a guess that this volume has significantly more of Sanderson's writing in it than Jordan's. That's no criticism, though, as Sanderson's an excellent writer in his own right; the most important thing is the story and the characters, and those Sanderson carries through clear as day. Whatever problems Sanderson might have had adapting to Jordan's voice, he's clearly been working on them, and his work has clearly paid off. He's still not pitch-perfect, and there are definitely still moments where you're reminded of the transfer, but overall there's a vast improvement, even in characters he seemed to "hiccup" on in *The Gathering Storm* (such as Matrim Cauthon). The result is that every point-of-view character, at least, speaks clearly with a voice that's recognizably *their own*, the voices we've known for all the twenty-odd years some of us have been following this series. I'll avoid detailed plot summaries for fear of spoilers, apart from noting that the book focuses primarily on Perrin and Mat's storylines, overlapping much of the timeline in *The Gathering Storm* and extending past it slightly, with significant further development for Rand, Galad, Gawyn, Egwene, and Elayne as well (in approximately that order, proportionally). Perrin especially gets a lot of development, and if you've ever thought anything like "Perrin used to be my favorite character, but. . . ." you'll probably be very happy about the turn he takes in this volume. The pacing is torrential, to the point that I read most of the book quite literally pacing around the room, too hooked to sit either

myself or the book down. It does pay a price for that -- the action moves *so* quickly that at times some of the fine detail work is lost, some side-plots feel a little rushed through and some characters feel a little peripheral -- but it's probably a price worth paying at this point in the series. The main defining trait of this volume, though, is that as I read it, I had the same sense of cascading finality that I get when I've almost solved a particularly nasty crossword puzzle or rubik's cube: the sense that after all that struggle and effort, *everything* is *finally* falling into place. At the end, it's pretty clear that all the dominoes are in line, the horses are at their starting gates, the match is poised above the fuse; all that's left is the flick, the home stretch, the final explosion. I'm looking forward to it. It's a feeling I've been waiting twenty-odd years for, and, well, to give in to understatement, it's pretty cool. If you've followed this series like I have, if you've been waiting for it too, you'll like this volume.

Brandon Sanderson is one of my favorite writers. One of the reasons I even picked up the wheel of time series in the first place was based on an interview of Sanderson, in which, he explained where some of his original inspiration had come from. When I found out he had also contributed to the final portions of this epic tale I had no choice to give it a shot. Sanderson has done a great job helping close the saga. He makes you fall in love with Mat, Perrin, and many of the characters through their ending days. He and Jordan have developed such relatable characters that you find yourself dying to find out what will happen to them next. Sanderson has a style of his own and knows how to leave chapters on cliffhangers where you can't help to get to the next chapter for the character you were reading about. The next thing you know you are killing a whole book in one day. His writing style is insane. If you have made it this far in the series, you know it lagged a bit in pacing in the middle books, but in the final three it has picked up momentum and you have to follow it all the way to The Final Battle yourself. Enjoy!

Those of you who started the Wheel of Time series know that from vol. 6-11, the author (Robert Jordan) got so bogged down with so many characters questing various things that 600-800 pages would go by and not much movement would take place. It got tedious in the extreme and many of us gave up on what had been a promising premise and interesting first five novels. Unfortunately (because of the death of Jordan) it took the intervention of Brandon Sanderson to breathe life back into the tedium and finally get us to the Last Battle with aplomb. Sanderson has a great gift for cohesion in large novels, and having Jordan's vast panoply of characters wrap up and weave together their journeys and quests is worthy of the "Pattern" itself. So those of you who dropped out

of the tedium, I welcome you back to what you find to be a very satisfying last three books.

Brandon Sanderson rescued this series. As his influence grew and Jordan's receded, the female characters became more than one dimensional, their entire existence stopped being about controlling and being rescued by men. They started having their own motivations! There was character growth! Robert Jordan created a wonderful universe, but he never could figure out how to write female characters (who were some of the main characters of the story, so this was kind of glaring). And no more books that were about 300 pages longer than they needed to be. It made me remember why I loved the first books so much.

I didn't think the series could get better than Book 12, but this one was even better. Sanderson clearly grew more comfortable with the characters and cultures, and got to display his awesome skill at writing battles. (Spoiler) My one complaint is that the transformation that Rand went through at the end of Book 12 makes him feel like a completely different person than who he's been through the rest of the series. This impression is largely due to the fact that we don't get his perspective at all in this book, except in the epilogue. But as I read, I started to feel like this was intentional. He overcame his darkness so suddenly, that the people around him are confused about who he is now. The reader feels the same way. I'm told that we rediscover his character and mindset in the final book. I'm looking forward to it.

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