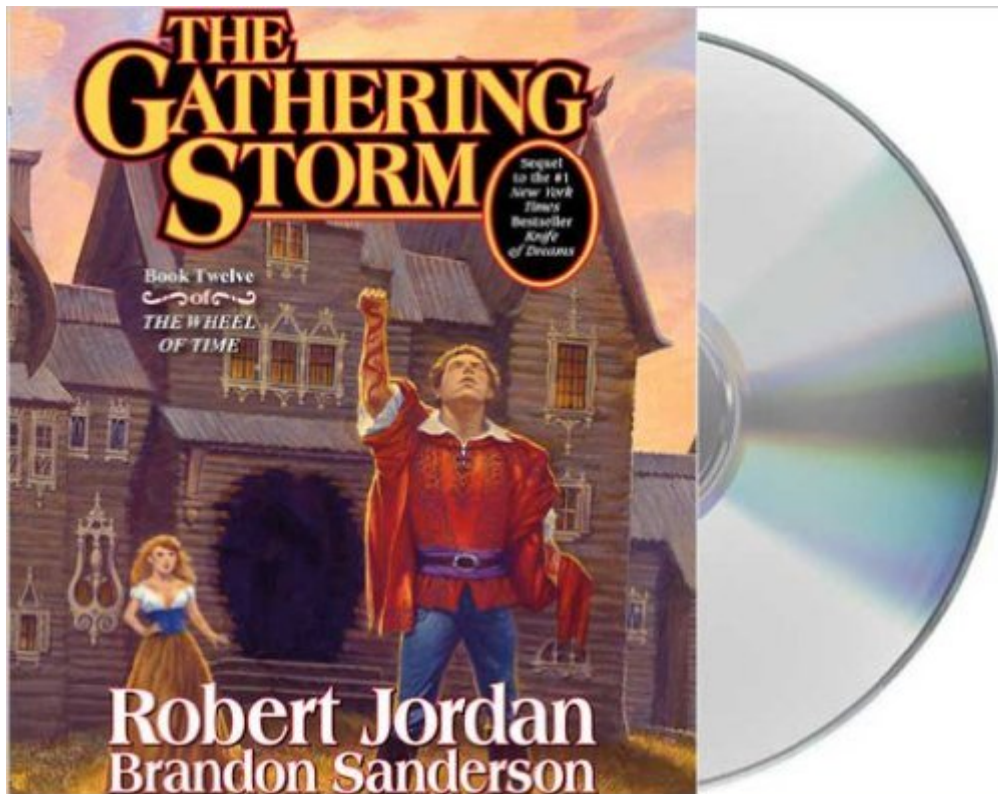


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The Gathering Storm (Wheel Of Time)



Synopsis

Tarmon Gaiâ™don, the Last Battle, looms. And mankind is not ready. The final volume of the Wheel of Time, *A Memory of Light*, was partially written by Robert Jordan before his untimely passing in 2007. Brandon Sanderson, New York Times bestselling author of the Mistborn books, was chosen by Jordanâ™s editor---his wife, Harriet McDougal---to complete the final book. The scope and size of the volume was such that it could not be contained in a single book, and so Tor proudly presents *The Gathering Storm* as the first of three novels that will make up *A Memory of Light*. This short sequence will complete the struggle against the Shadow, bringing to a close a journey begun almost twenty years ago and marking the conclusion of the Wheel of Time, the preeminent fantasy epic of our era. In this epic novel, Robert Jordanâ™s international bestselling series begins its dramatic conclusion. Rand alâ™Thor, the Dragon Reborn, struggles to unite a fractured network of kingdoms and alliances in preparation for the Last Battle. As he attempts to halt the Seanchan encroachment northward---wishing he could form at least a temporary truce with the invaders---his allies watch in terror the shadow that seems to be growing within the heart of the Dragon Reborn himself. Egwene alâ™Vere, the Amyrlin Seat of the rebel Aes Sedai, is a captive of the White Tower and subject to the whims of their tyrannical leader. As days tick toward the Seanchan attack she knows is imminent, Egwene works to hold together the disparate factions of Aes Sedai while providing leadership in the face of increasing uncertainty and despair. Her fight will prove the mettle of the Aes Sedai, and her conflict will decide the future of the White Tower---and possibly the world itself. The Wheel of Time turns, and Ages come and pass. What was, what will be, and what is, may yet fall under the Shadow.

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Customer Reviews

The Gathering Storm is the twelfth volume in The Wheel of Time series and the first released since Robert Jordan's unfortunate death in 2007. Jordan spent his final months amassing and dictating a significant amount of notes, outlines and chapter summaries for another writer to use to finish the series. Previously, Jordan had indicated he'd wipe his hard drive to stop someone else completing his work, but with him being so close to the end of the story he changed his mind, trusting his wife and editor, Harriet, and his publisher Tom Doherty to find a writer capable of finishing the series well. In theory, it should have led to disaster: typically one writer finishing a series begun by another is an atrocious idea that only leads to very bad books (note the vomit-inducing new Dune novels and the ill-advised Amber continuations). The only example I can think of this working was when Stella Gemmell completed her late husband David's final novel in fine form, but the amount of work required to bring Wheel of Time to a conclusion required an altogether different level of commitment and effort from Brandon Sanderson. Almost unbelievably, Sanderson has pulled it off. In his introduction he hopes the differences between his style and Jordan, whilst unavoidably noticeable, will be comparable to a different (but still good) director taking over your favourite movie series but all the actors remaining the same. This isn't a bad analogy at all, and whilst there are a few moments in The Gathering Storm where you think, "I don't think Robert Jordan would have done things quite like that," there's never a moment where you think, "He definitely wouldn't have done that at all!" which is vital.

This book is a genuinely great contribution; if you like any other book in the Wheel of Time series, you'll like this one. It's the 12th book in the ongoing saga; Jordan unfortunately and sadly died in 2007, before completing the last chunk of the series, and Brandon Sanderson (author of several excellent but less-well-known fantasy novels) was hired to finish it up based on Jordan's notes, outlines, and completed sections. Those kinds of handovers seldom go well, and to add to that uncertainty, the quality of the series has been somewhat of a sine wave, with definite peaks and definite valleys. So, despite a marked increase in quality in the book immediately prior to this one (Knife of Dreams, which came out in 2005), Jordan's death and the series' checkered history gave real reason to fear that the handover of this series would not go well. So far as this volume goes, at

least, the handover has succeeded. There's a real spark and fire here; if you're a fan of the earlier books, and you haven't gotten completely jaded to the entire Wheel of Time series by now, you *will* love this one as well. Promise. Because of the nature of the coauthorship (Jordan wrote some sections of this book before he died, and the rest was completed from 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, and there were one or two moments where I as a reader wondered whose voice I was reading, and one or two points where I felt Sanderson had stumbled slightly in his presentation of a character or handling of internal monologue. (After several re-reads, the issue seems to be that a few of Sanderson's turns of phrase seem more stylistically "modern" than what Jordan had used to date).

As I sat down and opened the book to the map page, I was surprised at the well of emotions I felt. I gazed upon the map of the world where I have spent so many enjoyable, frustrating, mind boggled hours and tears filled my eyes. I felt like I was reacquainting myself with an old, much loved friend. Like so many others, I began reading the Wheel of Time series almost 2 decades ago. And, again, like so many others, my heart broke upon hearing the news of Robert Jordan's passing. He created such a vivid, real world, unlike anything I had encountered before or since. When I heard the torch had been passed to Mr. Sanderson, I was elated the story would be brought to conclusion, if a bit worried at how well the vision would be upheld. I would be dishonest if I said the transition between authors was seamless, but I did seriously love the book, largely because of some of the differences in style. I like the way the characters seem to have matured. There is added depth to the characterizations, a deeper PoV, that I really enjoyed, especially with Rand, Egwene and Nynaeve. As was mentioned in another review, the women are portrayed a little more realistically, with less hair pulling and sniffing. I liked it. I also had no problem with Mat, unlike others. He has always been my favorite character and I look forward to his story. It seems the next installment will focus on the Tower of Ghenjei and Moraine, in which Mat should figure prominently. I purposely did not reread the series prior to The Gathering Storm, which I think made the transition to Mr. Sanderson less jarring than it may have been had I recently been immersed in RJ's vision. Nonetheless, there were a few moments where the story let up enough for me to realize a different bard had taken up the song.

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