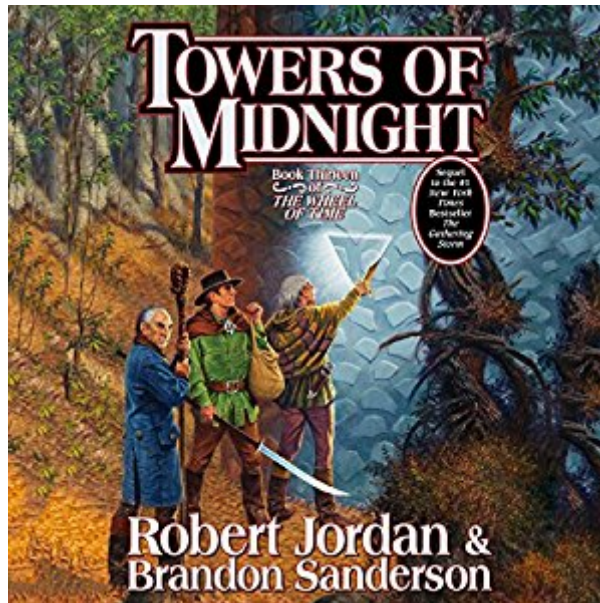


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Towers Of Midnight: Wheel Of Time, Book 13



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

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 38 hours and 24 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Macmillan Audio

Audible.com Release Date: November 2, 2010

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B004ADQB88

Best Sellers Rank: #78 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Epic #230 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Epic #524 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature

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.

I've had a love/hate relationship with Wheel of Time for years, a litany of loathing, forgiveness, despair, and faltering hope that's far too extensive to go into just now. Suffice it to say that this series and I have history. I was cautiously optimistic when I heard that Sanderson was taking over from Mister Jordan: speaking plainly, there were a lot of poorer choices out there. I'm trying to keep that constructive attitude in mind two books on. The good news: the book is great. Better than Gathering Storm. Sanderson is settling in, as it were, and I think that writing with one successful installment behind him gave him the confidence to improve the novel with a few of his own signature touches. At the same time, he's obviously improved on some characterizations: Mat in particular feels closer to the character we know from Jordan than he did in Gathering Storm. Towers of Midnight also manages to get things done. Sanderson has really pulled out all the stops on his pacing, and the contrast between this installment and something like, say, Crossroads of Twilight is absolutely stunning. From molasses in midwinter, we've gone in the course of two books to driving a sports car down a steep incline...with the sensation that we're seconds away from free fall. This gives the series a much-needed kick in the rear: Tarmon Gai'don, at long, long last, actually feels imminent. My problems with the book, if they can be said to be problems, are minimal and actually make me suspicious of their origin. This is because they're basically all centered around the fact that it is Sanderson, and not Jordan, who is writing the book. But I still don't feel quite honest giving the novel five stars.

After twelve books of slow-moving, intricate plotting (and a hefty dose of filler), the Last Battle

against the Dark One is here. So is "Towers of Midnight" good? Oh yeah. Brandon Sanderson and the late Robert Jordan came up with a solid penultimate volume, sprinkled with solid characterization, epic moments, and the occasional discovery that will probably have you bouncing and screaming with joy. It's a rich, fast-moving experience that will leave you on edge for the grand finale. And yes, thanks for asking -- it IS hard to review this without spoiling too much. While the previous book was more centered on Rand and his inner turmoil, this one centers on Mat and Perrin -- there are countless intertwined subplots in this one, but the important ones rest on those two. Specifically, Mat has to grapple with the gholam at long last, and Perrin has to work out his issues as well as his wolfish other side. Tarmon Gai'don is coming, and Jordan and Sanderson really hammer it home that this will not be an easy or quick battle. "Towers of Midnight" has a lot riding on it: not only does it have to build up to an epic grand finale in the next book, but it has to start wrapping up all the important storylines. Does it deliver? For the most part, yes -- Sanderson doesn't quite capture a few of the characters' personalities (such as Mat), but overall this is a smashing book. Sanderson's vibrant juggernaut prose actually meshes very well with Jordan's intricate, slow-moving storylines, and it feels much sleeker and less bogged down in minutiae. And despite Tarmon Gai'don looming over the characters' heads, there are actually some funny moments (mostly from Mat) and some powerful, riveting ones that seem to leap out from the pages.

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