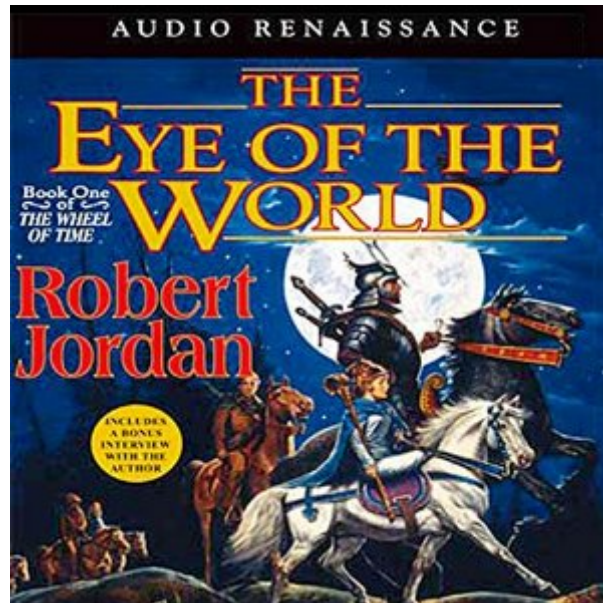


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The Eye Of The World: Book One Of The Wheel Of Time



Synopsis

The Wheel of Time turns and Ages come and go, leaving memories that become legend. Legend fades to myth, and even myth is long forgotten when the Age that gave it birth returns again. In the Third Age, an Age of Prophecy, the World and Time themselves hang in the balance. What was, what will be, and what is, may yet fall under the Shadow. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 1990, I picked up a book by a writer named Robert Jordan, who was mainly known among fans of fantasy for the Conan novels he penned, which were among my favorites at the time. I bought it without a moment's hesitation and loved it. The Eye of the World followed the classic formula high fantasy had been treading since Tolkien wrote of hobbits leaving the Shire with Nazgul in pursuit. Getting to the end of the book and realizing it was the first in the series was icing on the cake of a thrilling, fast paced fantasy read. I couldn't wait for what I assumed would be the conclusion, the third book in the series. After all, nearly all high fantasy before the 90's were trilogies. Alas, Book 3 did not wrap up the story, and in a pre-Internet world, I had no way of knowing that Jordan intended for 12 books. By the time book 6 came out, I was tired of waiting for closure. So I got stuck at book seven for several years. Last year, I began listening to Book 7, sure that I'd be using it to augment my actual reading of the book. I'm not sure I've picked up a Jordan novel since. But I am about to begin Book 11. And I'm looking forward to the posthumous collaboration of Jordan with Brandon Sanderson. So, to all those who have given up on Jordan, and wished they hadn't, or to those who

are thinking about starting but have heard too many negative reviews, here's how I recommend reading Robert Jordan's "Wheel of Time" series.

1. Understand that Jordan loves detail. He describes clothing in so much detail, that if "Wheel of Time" ever gets optioned for film or television, the costume designers will be able to go for a lot of coffee breaks. He is fond of giving elaborately detailed descriptions of every character, even minor ones.
2. The repetition of previously established plot elements in subsequent books is for people traveling on planes who pick up book 5 in the airport. It allows them to enter the world enough to get through the read. It's a device publishing companies use with bestselling series like this to ensure that the series remain a bestseller. While I have never started any series mid-way through, some people apparently do, and these passages are for them.
3. Jordan likes to weave intricate plots with a cast of characters so large it necessitates a glossary at the end of each book. Many of the books are entirely character based, and so seem to have "no action" taking place. This is because many readers want someone to storm a tower, engage in a climactic battle, or throw a ring into a fiery pit. Jordan is too busy marrying characters or introducing a new plot thread to bother with such things. And while he may not talk about a character for one book, he almost always returns to them.
4. I started thinking about "Wheel of Time" as a television series. It's long enough to sustain several seasons, and the cast is basically the OC meets LOTR. We watch TV one episode at a time. I began to view the chapters in each book as "episodes" of "Wheel of Time" as a television series, and each book as a "season." I don't like every episode of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and there are some seasons I like better than others. Some of my favorite episodes are in my least favorite seasons. But I love the characters, and I want to see what happens to them. I love the characters in Wheel of Time. I want to see what happens to them. So I keep "tuning in."
5. I got over the reasons I quit. Simply put, they were my reasons. I had expectations of Jordan he never intended to fulfill. I expected him to wrap it up in a trilogy. He didn't. I expected him to snap Rand out of his sullen funk. He didn't. I expected him to stop telling me about the embroidery on coats or dresses. He didn't. I expected him to bring a certain major character back from the dead. He didn't. And finally, I expected him to finish before he passed away. And he didn't. It was that last one that really galvanized me. When I heard he had terminal cancer (many years after it was a reality), it got me thinking about the legacy the man would leave on this earth. An epic bestselling fantasy series. And I realized that, to quote Elvis and Sinatra, he'd done it his way. I might not like some of the choices Jordan made, but I love the world he created and the people walking through it. And I want to know how they fare in the end.

So that's my journey to Book 11 of "Wheel of Time" and I share it because I want new readers to know what to expect, but also to let go of those expectations, and know that the journey is worth taking. Especially if you want to be

there when the final novel is released next year. Me? I'll be starting book 1 again this fall and listening to all the previous "Seasons" of "Wheel of Time," one per month, in anticipation of the final installment. The Wheel of Time turns...and I'll be "turning pages" with it.

The Wheel of Time is probably the best-known and most widely read fantasy series other than The Lord of the Rings. When this book was published in 1988 or 1989, it created a sensation -- a tremendous first volume that had the usual good-evil battle and tons of action but also was filled with magic, history, politics, sociology, cultural background and realistic characters. When I re-read the first five books, I was amazed at the details of history and politics that Jordan provided in his world. Jordan also has numerous protagonists, not just one or two primary ones like many other fantasy writers. Moreover, Eye of the World features strong men and, through their magical abilities and powerful personalities, stronger women. Jordan has been rightly lauded for the prominent and powerful roles he created for the female characters. The Great Hunt, The Dragon Reborn, The Shadow Rising and The Fires of Heaven followed and created a tremendous series such that The New York Times noted that Jordan had come to dominate the genre that Tolkien made famous. In Eye of the World, the writing is smooth, the various characters and their motivations work well, and there's action aplenty. The sense of innocence and mystery that correspond to the heroes' relative lack of knowledge of their surroundings and the world at large is palpable and realistic. Unfortunately, starting with Lord of Chaos (book 6), Jordan's creation became unwieldy. Instead of concentrating on following the themes and story-threads of books 1-5 (which combined are more than 3500 pages, hardcover), he created new storylines, bogged down the narrative and halted the pace of the epic. Book 8 in particular is an unmitigated disaster -- 650 pages (hardcover) of wheel-spinning (pardon the pun) with almost no progress to the story. Book 9 began to jump-start the narrative once again. The series is at 10 books (the tenth will be published in about two months from now) and growing (13 total possible -- it's a common numerical theme in the books), thus the last volume will be published in 2006, at the earliest. The Eye of the World is great, as are the next four in the series. They are, however, addictive, so know what you're getting into.

This book was recommended to me by the manager of a brick and mortar store nearby. I have read a great deal of science fiction/fantasy, and after a while, it all starts to feel the same. You know what I mean: how many times can we revisit Tolkein-esque characters like elves, dwarves, and orcs? I was very pleased to discover an entirely new world. Robert Jordan has created a landscape of magnificent proportions. Accents, legends, superstitions, politics...His amazing attention to detail

allowed me to become fully immersed in the story. Even more surprising is that the quality of his writing is maintained throughout the book's length of 782 pages. I couldn't put this novel down, with the result that I finished it well inside of a week. This is the first book of a series, and the reviews for some of the later books aren't as glowing. However, I feel that this book is a great read, and can stand on its own. It is not uncommon for series to degrade over time -- take a look at "Wishsong of Shannara" by Terry Brooks, "The One Tree" by Stephen R. Donaldson, or "The Sorceress of Darshiva" by David Eddings. All three of these books fail to live up to the quality of others in their respective series, but that doesn't mean you should avoid the series altogether. "Eye of the World" provides us with an epic that is also refreshingly new. Robert Jordan presents us with a world that is the most richly colorful since Tolkein. If you're a fan of fantasy, then don't miss reading this book.

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