A Memory of Light by Robert Jordan and Brandon Sanderson

The Wheel of Time, started over 22 years ago, is finally finished. And its last book holds everything that was promised.

Even if you've only been following what's happening in the world of fantasy very loosely, you've almost certainly heard that A Memory of Light, the greatly anticipated 14th and last book in Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time series, was released on January 8th this year.

The way it came about is worthy of a story itself. Planned as the twelfth and final book in series, its author, Robert Jordan, died of a rare blood disease in 2007, leaving the book unwritten. His wife and main editor, Harriet McDougal, came to read Brandon Sanderson's eulogy for her husband and was both moved and greatly impressed by it. After reading one of his books, Harriet found herself sure that Brandon was the author she wanted to finish The Wheel of Time.

Choosing Sanderson was the best decision she could have made. There are few authors who can churn out as much high quality writing as Brandon does – in fact, some fans jokingly call him Brandonbot, implying that only a robot could write as much and as quickly as he does.
Upon going through the notes Jordan left behind, Brandon and Harriet quickly realized that the material was too extensive for one book and took the decision to split it into three volumes: *The Gathering Storm* (*TGS*, released 2009), *Towers of Midnight* (*ToM*, released 2010) and, finally, *A Memory of Light* (*AMoL* released this year). It's quite remarkable that Brandon wrote all three books, every volume with a word count of over 300K, in under five years. Especially when you consider he simultaneously released numerous books of his own.

Robert Jordan was not only a master of having hundreds of things going on at once (to the extent that you found yourself exasperated at times with multiple plot lines you didn't want to read right now, because that other one, the one you just finished, was so much more exciting and you wanted to find out where that was going first), but also of foreshadowing, allowing speculation and the building of theories to a great extent (There are currently 1528 theories about *The Wheel of Time* on theoryland.com). With so many characters, viewpoints and events going on all over the place, many feared that it was impossible to bring everything together in the end.

Well, I'm glad to say, that you no longer need to worry, because Brandon did it! Readers, such as myself, felt there were already good signs in *TGS* and *ToM* of plot lines ending and being drawn together. Everything was becoming focused on the end, the Last Battle.

And what a battle it is. I'm not spoiling anything by saying that Rand will fight the Dark One, but, besides that, *A Memory of Light* is, to a great extent, about war. The forces of the Light finally clash with the Dark One's Armies on a massive scale.

*Towers of Midnight* ended with the Dragon Reborn's plan to bring all monarchs and their armies together on the Field of Merrilor, forging one huge army under his command. But, despite the Last Battle drawing close, most still have their own motivations and schemes against each other... whilst others have completely different ideas on how the Last Battle should be fought.
None more so than Egwene the Amyrlin Seat, leader of the powerful Aes Sedai, and Rand's once-betrothed. She emphatically disagrees with the plan on how they will seal the Bore; but they have no time to argue. Caemlyn, capital of Andor, one of the greatest cities on the continent, is lost to an unexpected Trolloc assault and Lan Mandragoran, uncrowned king of the Malkier, already fights the Shadowspawn at Tarwin's Gap. But if help is not coming soon, already the first rencounter with the Shadow will be lost.

And while Rand al'Thor is struggling to bring everyone in line, Mat Cauthon arrives far to the south in Ebou Dar, as far away from the Shadow's forces as possible, hoping to meet Tuon, his wife and empress to the Seanchan – a yet unknown force in the fights to come. Will the Son of Battles be able to avoid this final one?

In the meantime (see what I mean about hundreds of plot threads), Darkfriends have undermined the Black Tower, using a terrible ritual to bring more and more Asha'man to the Dark One. Will the most powerful gathering of male channelers fight for the Shadow?

Perrin Aybara is at the Fields of Merrilor, but he has still a score to settle. A score crucial to the Dragon Reborn's victory. Without help, he is sure that he won't be able to finally kill Slayer. But not even the wolves want to tell him what he needs to know.

And so the Wheel of Time turns, weaving everybody into the pattern, unaware that it may soon be broken. Dovie'andi se tovya sagain!

All in all, this book has got everything you could realistically have hoped for, especially the ending, which was written by Robert Jordan years ago. Needless to say it is as satisfying and as befitting as you could have hoped.

A quick word of warning: If you're going to read this book, don't start if you don't have the time to sit down with it. The book will likely consume all your time, as it did mine. You will chuckle, laugh
out loud, choke up, cry and curse yourself for not being able to read faster.

Sure, some questions remain unanswered, some expectations aren't met and some resolutions aren't as exciting as I'd imagined them to be, but overall Brandon did a hell of a job. Now that the series is finished, and with the last book fresh on my mind, I can comprehend the enormity of the task set to him and appreciate fully what he has achieved in three short years. Thank you, Brandon: for not walking away from this, as any reasonable man would have done.

Obviously this review is aimed at those who are already familiar with *The Wheel of Time*. Reading *A Memory of Light* without the knowledge of at least part of the back story would leave any reader utterly confused.

But if you haven't read *The Wheel of Time* and are curious what all this fuss is about, I'd honestly suggest you hurry up and grab it! Yes, it's incredibly long and yes, it has its weak points, like everything else (did I hear somebody mumble volume ten?), but – and it's a great but – *The Wheel of Time* is one of the most truly epic series out there. Certainly, no other story is told on such a grand scale.

* A Memory of Light, the 14th and final book in *The Wheel of Time* series is out now. If you'd like to start the series from the beginning, the first book is called *The Eye of the World*. 