

Mistborn: The Bands of Mourning

by Brandon Sanderson · Language: EN

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Overview

Mistborn: The Bands of Mourning is the third novel in Brandon Sanderson's Wax and Wayne series, set in the industrialized world of Scadrial, centuries after the original Mistborn trilogy. The story follows lawman and Twinborn Waxillium Ladrian, who is drawn away from his quiet life in the city of Elendel by a mysterious kidnapping and the discovery of a legendary artifact known as the Bands of Mourning. These mythical metal minds, supposedly belonging to the Survivor himself, are said to grant immense power to anyone who can claim them. Wax, along with his partner Wayne, the scholar Marasi, and the enigmatic Steris, must travel to the rugged and backward region of the Roughs, where they uncover a conspiracy involving the rogue kandra, the Set, and the true history of their world.

The novel blends frontier adventure with heist-like plotting and deep magical system exploration. As the group races to find the Bands before the villainous Set can use them for their own ends, they face ancient traps, a rogue kandra named Bleeder, and revelations that challenge their understanding of Scadrial's past and future. The story arc culminates in a confrontation that not only resolves the immediate quest but also sets the stage for the larger conflict between the forces of Preservation and Ruin, hinting at the return of a god-like threat. The book matters because it expands the Mistborn universe, deepens the lore of the metallic arts, and explores themes of identity, legacy, and the nature of power, all while delivering Sanderson's signature action and wit.

Key Takeaways

- The Bands of Mourning are not what they appear to be; they are a cleverly constructed trap and a test of intent, not a simple source of power.
- Trust and cooperation are essential; Wax's team succeeds because each member brings unique skills and perspectives, not because of any single hero.
- The past is not always as it is recorded; the true history of the Survivor and the Bands is hidden and must be uncovered through investigation and open-mindedness.
- Identity is fluid; characters like Wayne and Marasi grow by embracing who they want to become, not by clinging to their past roles.
- Technology and magic can coexist and even complement each other, as seen in the use of guns alongside Allomancy and Feruchemy.

- The Set's goal is not mere conquest but a radical reshaping of society, which requires understanding their ideology to counter them effectively.
- Sacrifice is sometimes necessary for the greater good, as demonstrated by Wax's willingness to risk everything to stop the Set's plans.
- The ending sets up a larger conflict, indicating that the fight against the Set is far from over and that the gods themselves may be involved.

Chapter Summaries

Part One: The Hunt

Wax and Wayne are in the city of Elendel, dealing with the aftermath of previous events. A kidnapping of a nobleman's daughter leads Wax to investigate, but he soon discovers that the case is connected to the legendary Bands of Mourning. Marasi, now a constable, is assigned to the case as well. The group learns that the Bands are said to be hidden in the Roughts, and they decide to travel there. Steris insists on coming along, despite Wax's reluctance. The journey begins, and they encounter a mysterious kandra named Bleeder who seems to be following them.

Part Two: The Roughts

The group travels through the untamed lands of the Roughts, facing harsh conditions and bandit attacks. They meet a local guide named Allik, who claims to be from a distant land and speaks of a place called the 'South'. Allik reveals that the Bands of Mourning are real and that his people have been searching for them. Wax and his team also learn that the Set is actively hunting for the Bands, and they must race against time. Along the way, they encounter a train heist orchestrated by Bleeder, which leads to a confrontation and the loss of some of their supplies.

Part Three: The Village

The group arrives at a small village in the Roughts, where they find evidence of the Set's activities. They discover that the village is being used as a base for the Set's operations, and they plan to infiltrate it. Marasi uses her intellect to uncover a plot involving the kidnapping of local people for experiments. Wax and Wayne engage in a firefight, and they manage to rescue some prisoners. However, they are captured by the Set and taken to a hidden fortress. There, they meet the leader of the Set, who reveals his plans to use the Bands to gain ultimate power.

Part Four: The Fortress

Wax and his team are imprisoned in the Set's fortress, but they manage to escape with the help of Allik, who reveals his true nature as a Feruchemist from the South. They learn that the Bands are not in the fortress but are hidden in a nearby temple. The group makes their way to the temple, facing traps and guardians. Inside, they find the Bands, but they are not what they expected. The Bands are a trap set by the Survivor to test those who seek power. Wax must

decide whether to take the Bands or destroy them, and he ultimately chooses to use them to defeat the Set's leader.

Part Five: The Aftermath

After the battle, Wax and his team return to Elendel, where they are hailed as heroes. They learn that the Set's plans have been thwarted, but the larger threat remains. Marasi discovers a hidden message from the Survivor that hints at a greater danger to come. Wax and Steris finally marry, and Wayne continues his own adventures. The book ends with a hint that the gods are returning, and the world of Scadrial is on the brink of a new era.

Themes

- Power and responsibility
- Identity and self-discovery
- Legacy and history
- Trust and teamwork
- Technology vs. magic

Notable Quotes

- "The Bands of Mourning are a myth, but myths have a way of becoming real." — Said by Wax early in the book when discussing the legend of the Bands.
- "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you just might find, you get what you need." — Wayne's humorous take on a situation, referencing a song.
- "I am not a hero. I am a lawman." — Wax's self-identification when questioned about his actions.
- "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there." — Marasi's reflection on the history of Scadrial.
- "Power is a tool, not a purpose." — A lesson Wax learns about the Bands of Mourning.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Mistborn: The Bands of Mourning about?

It's the third book in the Wax and Wayne series, following lawman Waxillium Ladrian as he hunts for the legendary Bands of Mourning, a set of metalminds that grant immense power. The quest takes him to the Roughts, where he confronts the villainous Set, a rogue kandra, and uncovers secrets about Scadrial's past.

Is Mistborn: The Bands of Mourning worth reading?

Yes, especially if you enjoy Sanderson's Cosmere universe. It delivers fast-paced action, clever magic systems, and character growth. The plot is engaging, and the ending sets up major events for the series. Fans of the previous books will find it a satisfying continuation.

How does Mistborn: The Bands of Mourning end?

Spoiler: Wax finds the Bands, but they are a trap. He uses them to defeat the Set's leader, who is revealed to be his sister Telsin. The Bands are destroyed, but a message from the Survivor hints at a greater threat. Wax and Steris marry, and the world faces a new era.

Who should read Mistborn: The Bands of Mourning?

Fans of epic fantasy with intricate magic systems and heist-like plots. It's ideal for readers who have read the previous Mistborn books, as it continues the story. If you enjoy character-driven adventures with a mix of action and mystery, this is for you.

How long does it take to read Mistborn: The Bands of Mourning?

The book is about 380 pages long, so at an average reading speed of 250 words per minute, it takes roughly 8-10 hours. Most readers finish it in a few days to a week, depending on their pace.