

Oathbringer

by Brandon Sanderson · Language: EN

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Overview

Oathbringer is the third volume in Brandon Sanderson's epic fantasy series The Stormlight Archive, following the events of The Way of Kings and Words of Radiance. The story continues the struggle on the planet Roshar, where a centuries-old war between the human-like peoples and the enigmatic Parshendi has escalated into a global conflict against the ancient and malevolent force known as the Voidbringers. The narrative centers on Dalinar Kholin, the highprince of Alethkar, who is haunted by his violent past and the mysterious loss of his wife's memories. As the world faces an apocalyptic threat, Dalinar must confront his own demons and forge a coalition of nations to stand against the coming storm.

The book is structured around Dalinar's journey of redemption and self-discovery, interwoven with the perspectives of other key characters: Kaladin Stormblessed, the former slave turned knight; Shallan Davar, the scholar and spy grappling with her fractured identity; and Adolin Kholin, Dalinar's son, who faces his own trials. The plot advances through political intrigue, epic battles, and the gradual revelation of Roshar's hidden history, including the true nature of the Knights Radiant and the origin of the Voidbringers. The climax involves a desperate defense of the city of Thaylenah, where Dalinar must make a pivotal choice that could save or doom the world.

Oathbringer matters because it deepens the philosophical and moral questions of the series, exploring themes of leadership, forgiveness, and the cyclical nature of violence. It expands the scope of the Stormlight Archive, setting the stage for the remaining books in the planned ten-volume saga. The novel is praised for its intricate world-building, complex characters, and emotional depth, solidifying Sanderson's reputation as a master of modern epic fantasy.

Key Takeaways

- Dalinar's journey shows that redemption is possible even for those who have committed terrible acts, but it requires confronting one's past and taking responsibility.
- The concept of oaths is central: the Knights Radiant gain power by swearing and upholding oaths, but breaking them has severe consequences.
- Unity is a recurring theme: the survival of Roshar depends on disparate nations and peoples setting aside their differences to face a common enemy.
- The past is not always as it seems: history is often written by the victors, and the true origins of the conflict are more complex than the characters initially believe.

- Personal growth often comes from acknowledging one's weaknesses and seeking help from others, as seen in Shallan's struggle with her multiple identities.
- Leadership requires making difficult choices and bearing the weight of those decisions, as Dalinar learns when he must choose between his honor and the greater good.
- The novel emphasizes that even in the face of overwhelming darkness, individuals can choose to act with courage and hope.

Chapter Summaries

Part One: The Stormwall

The book opens with Dalinar Kholin, now the leader of the coalition of human nations, struggling with visions of the past and the weight of his responsibilities. He is haunted by nightmares of his wife, Evi, whose death he cannot fully remember. Meanwhile, Kaladin Stormblessed and the Windrunners are training new recruits, and Shallan Davar is in Urithiru, the ancient city of the Knights Radiant, trying to uncover its secrets. The part introduces the threat of the Voidbringers and the need to unite the kingdoms against them. Dalinar's past as a brutal warlord is hinted at, setting up his character arc.

Part Two: The Shattered Plains

The coalition faces political challenges as various highprinces and monarchs resist Dalinar's authority. Adolin Kholin, Dalinar's son, becomes embroiled in a conflict with the arrogant highprince Sadeas, leading to a dramatic confrontation that results in Sadeas's death. This act weighs heavily on Adolin, who hides it from his father. Meanwhile, Shallan travels to the Shattered Plains to investigate the ancient city of the Radiants, and Kaladin leads missions to protect the coalition's forces from Parshendi attacks. The part ends with the discovery of a hidden Oathgate that could provide a strategic advantage.

Part Three: The Way of Kings

Dalinar embarks on a journey to the Nightwatcher, a mysterious being who grants boons and curses, in hopes of learning the truth about his past. He is accompanied by his son Adolin and his loyal guards. Along the way, they encounter the Cult of Moments and other dangers. Dalinar's encounter with the Nightwatcher reveals a cryptic message about the importance of oaths. Meanwhile, Shallan's investigation leads her to the discovery of a hidden library and the realization that the Voidbringers may not be what they seem. Kaladin continues to struggle with his role as a leader and his feelings for the princess Jasnah.

Part Four: The Rift

The narrative shifts to a flashback sequence detailing Dalinar's past, specifically his conquest of the Rift and the tragic events that led to the death of his wife Evi. Dalinar's memories reveal that he was manipulated by the voidbringer Odium, who amplified his rage and ambition. The

flashbacks show Dalinar's transformation from a ruthless warlord to a man seeking redemption. In the present, the coalition prepares for an impending attack on the city of Thaylenah, and Shallan's multiple personalities become more pronounced as she struggles to maintain her sanity.

Part Five: The Oathgate

The coalition forces, led by Dalinar, use the Oathgate to travel to Thaylenah, where they prepare for the final battle against the Voidbringers. The city is besieged by a massive army of Parshendi and their monstrous allies. Dalinar, Kaladin, and Shallan each face personal trials: Kaladin must protect the city's civilians, Shallan must confront her inner demons, and Dalinar must make a choice that could save or doom the world. The part culminates in a dramatic confrontation with the Voidbringer champion, and Dalinar's decision to swear the Third Ideal of the Bondsmiths, which allows him to unite the realms and banish the enemy.

Epilogue

The aftermath of the battle is shown, with the coalition celebrating a temporary victory. Dalinar is now a full Bondsmith, able to use the power of the Stormfather to unite the nations. However, the threat of Odium remains, and the characters realize that the war is far from over. Shallan begins to reconcile with her multiple identities, and Kaladin continues to struggle with his depression. The epilogue sets up the next book in the series, hinting at the arrival of a new enemy and the need for further oaths.

Themes

- Redemption and forgiveness
- The weight of oaths
- Unity in the face of chaos
- The nature of memory and identity
- Leadership and responsibility

Notable Quotes

- "The most important step a man can take. It's not the first one, is it? It's the next one. Always the next step." — Dalinar's realization during his flashback, as he reflects on his past and the need to move forward.
- "I will take responsibility for what I have done. If I must fall, I will rise each time a better man." — Dalinar's oath as he confronts his past and commits to redemption.
- "Sometimes a hypocrite is nothing more than a man in the process of changing." — Dalinar's reflection on his own hypocrisy and the possibility of change.

- "The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon." — A quote from the book's epigraph, attributed to the in-world author Hoid.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Oathbringer about?

Oathbringer is the third book in Brandon Sanderson's Stormlight Archive series. It follows Dalinar Kholin as he confronts his violent past and tries to unite the nations of Roshar against the Voidbringers, an ancient enemy. The story also focuses on Kaladin, Shallan, and Adolin as they face personal and external challenges. The book explores themes of redemption, leadership, and the power of oaths.

Is Oathbringer worth reading?

Yes, if you enjoy epic fantasy with deep world-building and character development. Oathbringer is widely praised for its emotional depth, intricate plot, and satisfying character arcs. It is a long book, but the pacing is generally well-handled, with a climactic ending that sets up future installments. Fans of the series will find it essential, and newcomers should start with the first book.

How does Oathbringer end?

Spoiler: The coalition defends Thaylenah from the Voidbringer army. Dalinar swears the Third Ideal of the Bondsmiths, gaining the power to unite realms and banish the enemy. He also reveals his past to the world, accepting responsibility for his actions. The battle is won, but Odium's threat remains, and the characters prepare for future conflicts.

Who should read Oathbringer?

Oathbringer is recommended for readers who enjoy epic fantasy series with complex magic systems, political intrigue, and deep character studies. It is best read after the first two books in the Stormlight Archive. If you appreciate authors like Robert Jordan or Patrick Rothfuss, you will likely enjoy Sanderson's work. Be prepared for a long read with many subplots.

How long does it take to read Oathbringer?

Oathbringer is approximately 1,200 pages long. At an average reading speed of 250 words per minute, it would take about 30 hours to read. Most readers take several weeks to finish it, depending on their pace and available time. It is a substantial commitment but worth it for fans of the series.