The Eye of the World

by Robert Jordan · Language: EN

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Overview

The Eye of the World is the foundational first novel in Robert Jordan's epic fantasy series, The Wheel of Time. It introduces readers to a richly detailed world, beginning in the isolated, peaceful village of Emond's Field in the Two Rivers. The story centers on Rand al'Thor, a young farmer, and his friends Mat Cauthon and Perrin Aybara, whose lives are irrevocably changed when their village is attacked by monstrous Trollocs and a terrifying Myrddraal during the Winternight festival. This assault is orchestrated by the forces of the Dark One, an ancient evil stirring to break free from his prison.

The attack reveals the presence of Moiraine Damodred, an Aes Sedai (a powerful female magic-user), and her Warder, Lan Mandragoran, who have come to Emond's Field searching for someone destined to confront the Dark One. To protect the village, Moiraine convinces Rand, Mat, and Perrin, along with Egwene al'Vere and the village Wisdom, Nynaeve al'Meara, to flee with her. Their journey takes them across a vast and dangerous land, pursued relentlessly by Shadowspawn and Darkfriends. They encounter various allies and enemies, learn about the wider world, and begin to uncover their own hidden potentials and the ancient prophecies that intertwine with their fates. The narrative culminates in a desperate quest to find the legendary Eye of the World, a magical artifact believed to be the only hope against the Dark One's growing power, leading to a climactic confrontation that reveals the true identity of the Dragon Reborn and sets the stage for the epic saga to follow.

Key Takeaways

- Even ordinary individuals can be thrust into extraordinary circumstances and discover hidden strengths.
- The choices made in the face of fear and uncertainty often define one's true character.
- Trust in unexpected allies is crucial when confronting overwhelming evil and ancient threats.
- Ancient prophecies and forgotten histories hold significant power in shaping the present and future.
- The world is far larger and more dangerous than one might perceive from a sheltered upbringing.
- Corruption and evil can manifest in subtle ways, not always as obvious monsters.

• Friendship and loyalty are vital anchors when faced with a destiny that feels too heavy to bear.

Chapter Summaries

Prologue: Dragonmount

The Prologue details the final moments of Lews Therin Telamon, the Dragon, after he tainted Saidin during the War of Power. Driven mad by the Dark One's counterstroke, he inadvertently destroys his own palace and family, including his wife Ilyena. He is found by the Aes Sedai, Ishamael, who briefly restores his sanity, allowing him to comprehend the horror of his actions. In despair, Lews Therin draws too much of the One Power, creating Dragonmount, a new mountain, in his final, self-destructive act. This event, known as the Breaking of the World, sets the stage for the Wheel of Time, establishing the prophecy of the Dragon's rebirth.

Chapters 1-5: Emond's Field

The story begins in Emond's Field, a remote village in the Two Rivers, during the preparations for the Bel Tine festival. Rand al'Thor, Mat Cauthon, and Perrin Aybara are introduced, along with Egwene al'Vere and Nynaeve al'Meara, the Wisdom. Rand's father, Tam al'Thor, finds a mysterious, ornate sword. The arrival of a beautiful Aes Sedai, Moiraine Damodred, and her Warder, Lan Mandragoran, disrupts the peaceful village. Their presence coincides with a sudden, brutal attack by Trollocs and a Myrddraal, creatures of the Shadow, on Emond's Field. Tam is gravely wounded, and Moiraine reveals that the Shadow is hunting three young men from the village.

Chapters 6-10: Flight to Baerlon

Following the Trolloc attack, Moiraine explains that the Shadow is specifically hunting Rand, Mat, and Perrin, and that they must leave Emond's Field immediately to protect their families. Egwene insists on accompanying them, and Moiraine reluctantly agrees. The group, consisting of Rand, Mat, Perrin, Egwene, Moiraine, and Lan, flees through the wilderness, constantly pursued by Trollocs and Myrddraal. They encounter a Darkfriend innkeeper, Master Hightower, in the village of Watch Hill, barely escaping. Moiraine begins to reveal fragments of information about the Dark One and the coming danger, emphasizing the urgency of their journey towards the city of Baerlon.

Chapters 11-14: Baerlon and the Road

The group arrives in Baerlon, a bustling city, a stark contrast to the Two Rivers. Rand, Mat, and Perrin experience city life for the first time, encountering new customs and dangers. Nynaeve al'Meara, having tracked them from Emond's Field, confronts Moiraine and insists on joining the group, determined to protect her villagers. Moiraine reveals that the Shadow's pursuit is relentless and that staying in one place is too dangerous. They continue their journey, heading

towards Caemlyn, but are forced to take a detour through the cursed city of Shadar Logoth to evade a large contingent of Trollocs and a Fade.

Chapters 15-18: Shadar Logoth

The group enters Shadar Logoth, a city ruined by its own evil, where the malevolent entity Mashadar still lurks. Moiraine warns them not to touch anything. While seeking refuge from the pursuing Trollocs, Mat, driven by curiosity and greed, takes a jeweled dagger from a treasure hoard. As Mashadar rises, the group is separated in the chaos. Rand, Mat, and Thom Merrilin (who joined them earlier) escape together. Perrin and Egwene escape with Elyas Machera, a stranger they meet. Moiraine, Lan, and Nynaeve manage to escape separately, leaving the others to believe they are lost.

Chapters 19-22: Rand, Mat, and Thom's Journey

Rand, Mat, and Thom Merrilin travel together, performing as gleemen to earn their passage. They encounter various dangers, including Darkfriends and agents of the Shadow. In a small town, they are cornered by a Myrddraal and its Trollocs. Thom bravely sacrifices himself, seemingly dying in a fight against the Fade, allowing Rand and Mat to escape. Rand and Mat continue their journey alone, increasingly paranoid and distrustful, with Mat's behavior becoming more erratic due to the cursed dagger he carries from Shadar Logoth, which is slowly corrupting him and drawing the attention of the Shadow.

Chapters 23-26: Perrin and Egwene's Journey

Perrin and Egwene travel with Elyas Machera, a mysterious man who can communicate with wolves and is himself a "Wolfbrother." Elyas teaches Perrin about his own emerging connection to wolves, which manifests as heightened senses and an affinity for the creatures. They encounter the Tuatha'an, or Tinkers, a nomadic people who follow the Way of the Leaf, preaching non-violence. Perrin and Egwene learn about their peaceful philosophy and their search for the Song. Their journey is marked by growing understanding of Perrin's unique abilities and the dangers of the outside world.

Chapters 27-30: Whitecloaks and Reunion

Perrin and Egwene's journey with Elyas takes a dangerous turn when they are captured by the Children of the Light, known as Whitecloaks, led by Bornhald and Byar. The Whitecloaks, suspicious of Aes Sedai and anyone associated with them, accuse Egwene of being a Darkfriend and Perrin of being a creature of the Shadow due to his wolf-like eyes. They are interrogated and face execution. Moiraine, Lan, and Nynaeve, who have been tracking them, arrive just in time to rescue them, using the One Power to overwhelm the Whitecloaks. The group is partially reunited, but Rand and Mat are still missing.

Chapters 31-34: Rand and Mat in Caemlyn

Rand and Mat arrive in Caemlyn, the capital of Andor, a bustling and magnificent city. Rand, while exploring, accidentally climbs into the Royal Palace grounds and meets Elayne Trakand, the Daughter-Heir, and her half-brothers Gawyn and Galad. He witnesses the False Dragon Logain Ablar being paraded through the streets in a cage, experiencing the raw power of a male channeler. Rand and Mat are eventually reunited with Moiraine, Lan, Nynaeve, Perrin, and Egwene. Rand also meets Loial, an Ogier, who becomes an important ally and friend, introducing him to the vast knowledge of his people.

Chapters 35-38: Caemlyn's Secrets

In Caemlyn, Moiraine reveals more about the prophecies of the Dragon Reborn, hinting at Rand's potential role. Mat's condition worsens due to the cursed dagger from Shadar Logoth, making him increasingly paranoid, ill, and dangerous. Moiraine determines that the dagger's influence is too strong and that Mat must be healed by Aes Sedai at the White Tower, but there isn't time. Rand spends time with Loial, learning about the Ogier's history, their love for trees, and the existence of the Ways, ancient pathways used for rapid travel, which Moiraine plans to use to reach the Eye of the World.

Chapters 39-42: The Ways and Fal Dara

To save time and evade the Shadow's pursuit, the group, including Rand, Mat, Perrin, Egwene, Nynaeve, Moiraine, Lan, and Loial, enters the Ways, a network of magical tunnels created by the Ogier. The Ways are now corrupted by the Shadow, haunted by the malevolent entity Machin Shin, the Black Wind. They endure a terrifying journey through the dark, oppressive tunnels, barely escaping the Machin Shin's whispers and attacks. They finally emerge in Fal Dara, a fortress city in Shienar, on the Blightborder, where they are welcomed by Lord Agelmar Jagad, a staunch defender against the Shadow.

Chapters 43-46: Fal Dara and the Blight

In Fal Dara, Mat is gravely ill from the dagger's corruption. Moiraine uses a powerful healing weave to sever the dagger's connection to Mat, saving his life but leaving him weak and the dagger still dangerous. Moiraine reveals the true purpose of their journey: to reach the Eye of the World, a legendary place said to contain a pure source of the One Power and a powerful artifact, before the Dark One's forces can claim it. The group prepares for the perilous journey into the Blight, the corrupted land bordering the Shadow, knowing they face immense danger.

Chapters 47-50: Into the Blight

The company, consisting of Rand, Mat, Perrin, Egwene, Nynaeve, Moiraine, Lan, and Loial, ventures into the Blight. They navigate the twisted, unnatural landscape, encountering various horrific creatures of the Shadow, including jumara (worms) and other corrupted flora and fauna. The journey is physically and psychologically taxing, testing their resolve. They eventually reach the Green Man's grove, a pristine, uncorrupted sanctuary within the Blight, where the legendary guardian of the Eye of the World resides, a being made of plant matter.

Chapters 51-53: The Eye of the World

At the Eye of the World, the Green Man reveals the pool of pure Saidin and two powerful artifacts: the Dragon Banner and the Horn of Valere. He is immediately attacked and killed by two Forsaken, Aginor and Balthamel, who have been released from their prison. Rand, Mat, and Perrin confront the Forsaken. Rand, in a moment of desperate channeling, draws upon the pure Saidin from the Eye, unleashing immense power. He destroys Aginor and Balthamel, and then confronts Ba'alzamon, who appears to him in a dream-like battle, seemingly defeating him and obliterating a Trolloc army.

Epilogue: The Blight

In the aftermath of the battle at the Eye of the World, the group recovers. Moiraine confirms that Rand is the Dragon Reborn, having witnessed him channel the One Power. She explains the implications of his identity and the immense danger he now faces. The artifacts from the Eye, the Dragon Banner and the Horn of Valere, are secured. The group returns to Fal Dara, knowing that their journey is far from over and that the world is now aware of the Dragon Reborn's presence. Rand, Mat, and Perrin, along with Egwene and Nynaeve, prepare for their next steps, understanding the monumental task ahead.

Themes

- Destiny vs. Free Will
- The Nature of Evil
- Coming of Age
- Friendship and Loyalty
- Hidden Powers
- The Cycle of Time

Frequently Asked Questions

What is The Eye of the World about?

The Eye of the World is about three young men from a peaceful village who are forced to flee their home with a mysterious magic-user after an attack by dark creatures. They embark on a perilous journey across a vast world, discovering ancient prophecies, hidden powers, and their own intertwined destinies as they are pursued by the forces of an ancient evil.

Is The Eye of the World worth reading?

Yes, The Eye of the World is highly worth reading for fans of epic fantasy. It's a classic entry point into a sprawling, richly detailed world with a compelling plot, intricate magic system, and a memorable cast of characters. It lays the groundwork for one of the most beloved and extensive

fantasy series ever written.

How does The Eye of the World end?

Spoiler: The group reaches the Eye of the World, where Rand al'Thor confronts two of the Dark One's most powerful servants, the Forsaken, and a manifestation of the Dark One himself. Rand unknowingly channels immense, untainted power from the Eye, defeating the Forsaken and temporarily repelling the Dark One, revealing his true identity as the Dragon Reborn.

Who should read The Eye of the World?

This book is ideal for readers who enjoy traditional epic fantasy, detailed world-building, and a large cast of characters. If you appreciate long, immersive series with intricate magic systems, political intrigue, and a clear struggle between good and evil, The Eye of the World is an excellent starting point.

How long does it take to read The Eye of the World?

On average, it takes approximately 13 to 16 hours to read The Eye of the World. This can vary based on individual reading speed and whether the reader takes time to absorb the detailed world-building and character interactions.

Best Quotes

“The Wheel of Time turns, and Ages come and pass, leaving memories that become legend. Legend fades to myth, and even myth is long forgotten when the Age that gave it birth comes again.”

Prologue: Dragonmount

This is the iconic opening paragraph of every book in the series. It establishes the cyclical nature of time and history in the Wheel of Time universe, setting the grand, epic scope and the idea that past events and figures will re-emerge, albeit in altered forms.

“Duty is heavier than a mountain, death lighter than a feather.”

Chapter 4: The Gleeman

This ancient saying, often repeated by Lan Mandragoran, encapsulates the stoic philosophy of many characters, particularly those from the Borderlands. It emphasizes the paramount importance of fulfilling one's obligations, even at the cost of one's life, a theme central to the series.

“The world is not as you think it is, Rand.”

Chapter 8: A Place of Safety

Moiraine Damodred speaks this to Rand early in their journey, shattering his naive view of his peaceful Two Rivers home and the wider world. It signifies the beginning of his awakening to the true dangers and magical realities that exist beyond his sheltered village.

“The Dark One is stirring, Rand. The Shadow is reaching out.”

Chapter 8: A Place of Safety

Moiraine delivers this grave warning, explaining the immediate threat that forces Rand, Mat, and Perrin to leave Emond's Field. It introduces the primary antagonist and the overarching conflict of the series, establishing the urgency of their quest.

“The Pattern weaves as the Wheel wills.”

This phrase, frequently used by Moiraine, highlights the concept of destiny and fate in the Wheel of Time. It suggests that events are guided by a cosmic force, the Wheel, and that individuals are often instruments of a larger design, even if they resist.

“There are no coincidences, only the Pattern.”

Another statement from Moiraine, reinforcing the idea that seemingly random events are interconnected and part of the grand design woven by the Wheel of Time. It implies that every occurrence has significance within the larger unfolding narrative.

“You cannot run from what you are.”

Chapter 37: The Web Tightens

Moiraine tells this to Rand, emphasizing the inescapable nature of his destiny. It underscores the theme of accepting one's true identity and purpose, even when it is frightening or overwhelming, a struggle Rand faces throughout the book.

“We are only farmboys.”

Chapter 10: Leave-taking

Rand al'Thor often says this, particularly in the early chapters, reflecting his and his friends' humble origins and their disbelief at being thrust into world-altering events. It highlights their initial innocence and reluctance to accept their extraordinary roles.

“The Eye of the World is a place of power, Rand. A place where the Dark One's touch is weakest, and the Light's strongest.”

Chapter 47: The Eye of the World

Moiraine explains the significance of their ultimate destination. It reveals the nature of the Eye as a critical battleground and a source of pure untainted power, essential for confronting the

Shadow and protecting the world.

“The Dragon Reborn must face the Dark One.”

Chapter 47: The Eye of the World

Moiraine states this fundamental prophecy, revealing the ultimate purpose of the Dragon Reborn. It sets the stage for the climactic confrontation and establishes the immense burden and responsibility that falls upon the prophesied figure.

“The Shadow is not defeated, only driven back.”

Chapter 53: The Last Journey

Moiraine's somber assessment after the confrontation at the Eye of the World. It serves as a stark reminder that the victory is temporary and the greater struggle against the Dark One is far from over, setting up future conflicts.

“He will break the world again.”

Chapter 47: The Eye of the World

Moiraine's chilling prophecy about the Dragon Reborn. It refers to the historical event of the Breaking of the World caused by the previous Dragon, Lews Therin Telamon, and foreshadows the destructive potential and immense power Rand possesses.

“The Light preserve us!”

A common exclamation of fear or surprise throughout the book, reflecting the pervasive religious and cultural beliefs of the people in the Westlands. It underscores their reliance on the forces of good against the encroaching Shadow.

“The Horn of Valere.”

Chapter 13: Choices

This legendary artifact is introduced as a powerful item capable of summoning heroes from the past to fight in the Last Battle. Its mention establishes a key element of prophecy and future conflicts, hinting at its importance.

Questions & Answers

What is the significance of the title "The Eye of the World"?

The "Eye of the World" refers to a hidden pool of pure, untainted saidin (the male half of the One Power) and a repository of ancient artifacts, located deep within the Blight. It was created by the last surviving male Aes Sedai during the Breaking of the World to serve as a defense against the

Dark One. It becomes the destination for Moiraine and the Emond's Fielders, where the first major confrontation with the Shadow occurs.

Who is Rand al'Thor, and what is his destiny?

Rand al'Thor is a young farmboy from Emond's Field, initially unaware of his true heritage. He is one of the three ta'veren from his village, destined to play a pivotal role in the coming conflict. His destiny, as revealed by Moiraine, is to be the Dragon Reborn, the reincarnation of Lews Therin Telamon, who is prophesied to either save or break the world again.

What are Trollocs, and what is their role in the story?

Trollocs are monstrous, human-animal hybrids created by the Dark One during the War of the Shadow. They are brutal, savage creatures that serve as the primary foot soldiers of the Shadow. In "The Eye of the World," they attack Emond's Field, forcing Rand, Mat, and Perrin to flee, and pursue them throughout their journey, representing the constant, physical threat of the Dark One.

Who is Moiraine Damodred, and what is her purpose?

Moiraine Damodred is an Aes Sedai of the Blue Ajah, a powerful channeler of the One Power. Her purpose is to find the Dragon Reborn, protect him, and guide him towards his destiny to confront the Dark One. She arrives in Emond's Field, identifies the ta'veren, and leads them on a perilous journey across the Westlands, revealing the true nature of the world and the Shadow's threat.

What is the One Power, and who can wield it?

The One Power is the fundamental force of creation, drawn from the True Source, which turns the Wheel of Time. It has two halves: saidin (male) and saidar (female). Only certain individuals, known as channelers, can wield it. Women who can channel become Aes Sedai, while men who can channel are driven mad by the Dark One's taint on saidin, leading to the Breaking of the World.

What is a ta'veren?

A ta'veren is an individual around whom the Pattern of the Wheel of Time is strongly woven. Their presence causes events and people around them to twist and bend to serve the will of the Wheel, often leading to seemingly impossible coincidences or dramatic shifts in fate. Rand, Mat, and Perrin are all identified as ta'veren by Moiraine, explaining their central role in the unfolding prophecies.

Who are the Whitecloaks, and what do they believe?

The Whitecloaks, formally known as the Children of the Light, are a militant, fanatical organization dedicated to fighting the Shadow and all who they perceive as its agents, especially Aes Sedai, whom they believe are Darkfriends. They wear white cloaks as a symbol of their purity.

They are a significant antagonistic force in the book, often persecuting innocent people and clashing with Moiraine's group.

What is the Blight?

The Blight is a vast, corrupted wasteland bordering the Borderlands, where the Dark One's influence is strongest. It is a place of twisted, unnatural flora and fauna, where the air itself is poisonous, and creatures of the Shadow roam freely. The journey through the Blight is extremely dangerous and serves as the final approach to the Eye of the World.

What is the Dark One, and what does it want?

The Dark One, Shai'tan, is the ultimate evil entity in the Wheel of Time universe, imprisoned by the Creator at the moment of creation. It seeks to break free from its prison, destroy the Pattern of the Wheel, and remake the world in its own image, plunging all of existence into eternal chaos and suffering. Its influence is felt through its servants, the Forsaken, Myrddraal, and Trollocs.

What is the Horn of Valere?

The Horn of Valere is a legendary artifact, prophesied to summon heroes from the past to fight alongside the Dragon Reborn in the Last Battle. It is a symbol of hope and a powerful weapon against the Shadow. Its existence and the quest to find it are mentioned early in the book, hinting at its crucial role in future conflicts.

Spoiler: What happens at the Eye of the World?

Spoiler: At the Eye of the World, the group finds the Green Man, guardian of the Eye, and two of the Forsaken, Aginor and Balthamel. A battle ensues, resulting in the deaths of the Green Man and the two Forsaken. Rand then confronts the Dark One directly, using the pure saidin from the Eye to defeat its manifestation and drive back the Shadow, though he inadvertently reveals his ability to channel the One Power.

Spoiler: Who is revealed to be the Dragon Reborn in this book?

Spoiler: Rand al'Thor is revealed to be the Dragon Reborn. This is confirmed during the climax at the Eye of the World when he instinctively channels the pure saidin from the Eye to defeat the Dark One's manifestation. The heron-mark on his palm, which appears after the battle, further solidifies his identity as the prophesied figure.

Why does Rand run away from Moiraine and Lan initially?

Rand, along with Mat and Perrin, runs away from Moiraine and Lan because they are terrified and suspicious of the Aes Sedai. They are simple farmboys who have been taught to fear magic and the Aes Sedai, believing them to be dangerous and manipulative. They also struggle to accept the sudden, violent upheaval of their lives and the incredible, unbelievable claims Moiraine makes about their destiny.

What is the relationship between Rand, Mat, and Perrin?

Rand, Mat, and Perrin are childhood friends from Emond's Field, sharing a deep bond forged over years. They are like brothers, fiercely loyal and protective of each other. Their journey together strengthens this bond, even as their individual destinies begin to pull them in different directions and they each grapple with their unique roles as ta'veren.

What is Emond's Field like before the attack?

Emond's Field is depicted as a peaceful, isolated, and idyllic village in the Two Rivers, a region largely untouched by the outside world. Its inhabitants are hardworking farmers and shepherds, living simple lives guided by tradition and community. It is a place of innocence and safety, which makes the sudden, brutal Trolloc attack all the more shocking and impactful, shattering their sheltered existence.

What is the significance of the heron-mark sword?

The heron-mark sword is a distinctive blade, traditionally carried by master swordsmen who have achieved exceptional skill. Rand inherits one from his father, Tam al'Thor, which later becomes a symbol of his own burgeoning abilities and his connection to a greater destiny. The heron-mark appearing on Rand's palm after the battle at the Eye of the World further links him to this lineage of powerful figures.

What is the purpose of the Aes Sedai?

The Aes Sedai are an organization of women who can channel the One Power, based in the White Tower. Their stated purpose is to serve and guide humanity, protecting the world from the Shadow and maintaining balance. They are feared and respected, often misunderstood, but their primary goal is to prepare for the Last Battle and ensure the prophecies surrounding the Dragon Reborn are fulfilled.

What is the difference between saidin and saidar?

Saidin is the male half of the One Power, and saidar is the female half. While both draw from the True Source, they are fundamentally different in how they are wielded. Saidin was tainted by the Dark One during the War of the Shadow, driving any male channeler who touches it to madness and eventually death. Saidar remains untainted, allowing women to channel safely.

What is the role of Warders like Lan?

Warders are highly skilled warriors bonded to Aes Sedai through a magical link. They serve as protectors, companions, and confidantes to their Aes Sedai, sharing a deep, empathic connection. Lan Mandragoran, Moiraine's Warder, exemplifies this role, providing unparalleled combat prowess, tracking skills, and unwavering loyalty, often acting as a mentor and guardian to the young men.

What is the main theme of "The Eye of the World"?

A central theme of "The Eye of the World" is the loss of innocence and the reluctant acceptance of destiny. The young protagonists are thrust from their sheltered lives into a dangerous world, forced to confront evil and their own extraordinary, terrifying roles in a cosmic conflict. It explores themes of friendship, duty, the nature of good versus evil, and the struggle to understand and embrace one's true identity.