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THE WHEEL OF TIME®

by Robert Jordan

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Crossroads of Twilight

Knife of Dreams

by Robert Jordan
and Brandon Sanderson

The Gathering Storm

**THE FIRES
OF
HEAVEN**
ROBERT JORDAN

A TOM DOHERTY ASSOCIATES BOOK

NEW YORK

This is a work of fiction. All of the characters, organizations, and events portrayed in this novel are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

THE FIRES OF HEAVEN

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For Harriet
The light of her eyes is my Light.

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With his coming are the dread fires born again. The hills burn, and the land turns sere. The tides of men run out, and the hours dwindle. The wall is pierced, and the veil of parting raised. Storms rumble beyond the horizon, and the fires of heaven purge the earth. There is no salvation without destruction, no hope this side of death.

—fragment from *The Prophecies of the Dragon*
believed translated by N'Delia Basolaine
First Maid and Swordfast to Raidhen of Hoi Cuchone
(circa 400 AB)

PROLOGUE



The First Sparks Fall

Elaida do Avriny a'Roihan absently fingered the long, seven-striped stole about her shoulders, the stole of the Amyrlin Seat, as she sat behind her wide writing table. Many would have accounted her beautiful, at first glance, but a second look made it clear that the severity of her ageless, Aes Sedai face was not a momentary matter. Today there was something more, a light of anger in her dark eyes. If anyone had noticed.

She barely listened to the women arrayed on stools before her. Their dresses were every color from white to the darkest red, in silk or wool as each woman's taste dictated, yet all but one wore their formal shawls, embroidered White Flame of Tar Valon centered on their backs, colored fringe proclaiming their Ajahs, as though this were a meeting of the Hall of the Tower. They discussed reports and rumors of events in the world, trying to sift fact from fancy, trying to decide the Tower's course of action, but they seldom even glanced at the woman behind the table, the woman they had sworn to obey. Elaida could not keep her full attention on them. They did not know what was really important. Or rather, they knew and feared to speak of it.

"There is apparently something happening in Shienar." That was Danelle, slight and often seemingly lost in a dream, the only Brown sister present. Green and Yellow also had only one sister apiece, and none of the three Ajahs was pleased about that. There were no Blues. Now Danelle's big blue eyes looked thoughtfully inward; an unnoticed ink smudge stained her cheek, and her dark gray wool dress was rumpled. "There are rumors of skirmishes. Not with Trollocs, and not Aiel, though raids through the