

Dear Robert Jordan,

Hello. My name is Chris Bourikas, and I have been reading your *Wheel of Time* series for a long time now. One particular book out of this series truly speaks to me, *The Great Hunt*. It is my favorite book of all time. The epic adventure, the mystical secrets, the magic practically breathes out from the text as you read it.

As I read this text, I find my mind wandering right along with the characters through every dark place and every hair-raising moment. From the raid in Fal Dara Keep to the sounding of the Horn of Valere, not once did I want to put the book down. The characters in the novel also captured my imagination. I saw a little bit of myself in each one of them. Loial's love of books and knowledge, Perrin's resignation and future dedication to his fate, Rand's struggle to maintain his heritage: all of these hold up a mirror to my own experiences.

Perrin is just like me. He is slow to anger, careful to use his strength wisely. He likes to think things all of the way through before making any decisions. Some may think him slow, but he surprises everyone with his insights when he chooses to offer them. He talks little, preferring to let others stand in the limelight and make decisions; yet by no means is he a blind follower. He comes to his own conclusions, not allowing other people to guide him like a bull with a nose ring.

Loial is most like the intellectual part of me. He has large amounts of knowledge which proves useful in most situations. I myself read voraciously, allowing me to excel in English class. Most people would deem my time "better spent," yet I say to them that they should shut up once in a while and read a book; they might just learn something. Loial can lose himself in reading books for hours on end. I, too, have this trait. I remember one Saturday that I started reading at ten o'clock in the morning. After a while, I looked at the clock for the first time to see that it was almost three in the afternoon! Needless to say, my parents were none-too-thrilled with me being cooped up in my room for all of that time. Loial is sensitive to the moods of his surroundings, able to tell when someone is angry or sad. This trait, too, I have; I can usually tell when someone is angry or sad, even when they try to hide it.

Rand is in a struggle to maintain his heritage. He wants to believe in what his upbringing in the Two Rivers gave to him, namely an innate stubbornness as tough as the mountains. I have this trait, fortunately not in excess. I am not one of those people who would say "Up" just because another said "Down." It is a healthy trait which doesn't let me succumb to peer pressure and the like. Rand is fighting against the various influences of other people, namely Moiraine and the Amyrlin Seat. He refuses to be led around like a tethered mule for the schemes of others. All he wants is a simpler life, a life where there are not complications, a life in which he can tend his sheep with his father in peace. That is what I want, too – not the sheep, but a simpler life with no complications.

In all three of these characters I see bits of myself: a slow and steady thinker, an incredible bibliophile, and a seeker of a less complicated way of life. This novel helps me to better understand myself, what I want in life, who I am. The magic that this book contains cannot simply be stated as mere writing. It must be given its true name, that of imagination. There is no other term to describe it. It simply is the essence of the imagination.

Sincerely,

*Christopher Bourikas*