

# Empathy and Sympathy in Brandon Sanderson's *The Stormlight Archive*

Juha Helin  
Master's Thesis  
Master's Programme in English Studies  
Faculty of Arts  
University of Helsinki  
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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract Tutkielmassa käsittelen empatiaa ja sympatiaa Brandon Sandersonin fantasiakirjasarjassa <i>The Stormlight Archive</i> . Analysoin eri keinoja, joilla lukijoiden empatia ja sympatia sarjan hahmoja kohtaan herätetään. Analyysissa keskityn sarjan kolmen päähahmoon, Kaladiniin, Shallaniin ja Dalinariin, jotka ovat sarjan eniten fokalisoidut hahmot. Käyn läpi yleisiä kerromekanismeja, joiden avulla lukijoiden sympatia ja empatia hahmoja kohtaan syntyvät, minkä jälkeen tarkastelen hahmojen empatiaan ja sympatiaan käytettyjä keinoja omilla luovuuksilla. Sarja on julkaistu 2010-luvulla, ja näin ollen sen tähänastinen tutkimus on hyvin vähäistä. Tutkielmassani käyttämä teoreettinen viitekehys pohjautuu Suzanne Keenin teoriaan narratiivisesta empatiasta, sekä Howard Sklarin teoriaan narratiivisesta sympatiasta. Tämän lisäksi käytän Meir Sternbergin käsitteitä primäärisestä ja äskettäisestä efektistä, jotka ohjaavat lukijoiden tunteita hahmoja kohtaan. Analyysimetodinä käytän lähilukua. Tutkielman ensimmäisessä analyysiluvussa käsittelen Kaladinin hahmoa, ja esitän, että lukijoiden tunteet hahmoa kohtaan rakentuvat kolmella keskeisellä tavalla, joita käsitellään omilla alaluvuilla. Ensimmäisessä alaluvussa käsittelen Kaladinin sankaruutta ja siihen vaikuttavia hetkiä, toisessa hänen suhdettaan Syliin, ja kolmannessa sarjan ensimmäisen kirjan takaumalukuja. Toisessa analyysiluvussa keskityn Shallaniin, ja näytän, että empatia ja sympatia häntä kohtaan syntyvät hänen mutkikkaista ihmissuhteistaan, hänen sisäisestä kamppailustaan identiteettinsä kanssa, sekä sarjan toisen kirjan takauma-luvuista, jotka kertovat hänen synkistä nuoruudestaan. Kolmannessa analyysiluvussa tarkastelen Dalinarin hahmoa. Lukijoiden tunteet Dalinaria kohtaan muovautuvat hänen isähahmon roolinsa avulla. Tunteisiin häntä kohtaan vaikuttavat myös kolmannen kirjan takaumaluvut, sekä tietyt tunteikkaat hetket tarinassa. Tutkielmassa pyrin näyttämään, kuinka lukijoiden tunteet <i>The Stormlight Archiven</i> päähahmoja kohtaan syntyvät. Perustekniikoiden lisäksi osoitan, että Sandersonin käyttämät takaumat lisäävät lukijoiden tunteita hahmoja kohtaan. Tämän lisäksi sarjassa on käytetty tiettyjä hetkiä, sekä hahmojen sisäistä tunteiden myllerrystä lisäämään lukijoiden tuntemuksia hahmoja kohtaan.			
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## **List of Abbreviations**

*The Way of Kings* = *WoK*

*Words of Radiance* = *WoR*

*Oathbringer* = *OB*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Aims and Methods**

In this thesis, I analyze empathy and sympathy in Brandon Sanderson's *The Stormlight Archive*. By looking at the three main characters of the series, Kaladin, Shallan and Dalinar, I identify the main methods used by Sanderson to evoke readers' empathy and sympathy toward these characters. Each of the three characters has analepses in the series, separated into different novels. I examine the effect the analepses have on readers' perception of the character, as well as their function in creating readers' empathy and sympathy. There are distinct moments and events created around two of the characters, Kaladin and Dalinar, where the empathy toward the character is created through emotional build up and using montage-like imagery to add to the narrative suspense of the moment. Part of the empathy for each character is created through their inner contemplation, which enables character identification. The empathy for the characters is also emphasized by the narrative situation, as each of the characters is a focalizing character in large part of the series.

### **1.2 On Brandon Sanderson and *The Stormlight Archive***

Brandon Sanderson was born on December 19, 1975 in Lincoln, Nebraska. He enjoyed reading as a child, but due to book suggestions that did not suit his taste, he abandoned books completely. However, in the eighth grade, his teacher introduced him to fantasy, which led to him reading and liking epic fantasy books so much that he began writing them, although, according to Sanderson, his first attempts were dreadful. He started as a biochemistry major, but after doing missionary work for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he realized that he did not miss chemistry, but he missed writing.

Sanderson changed his major to English and wrote as much as he could alongside studying and working. He submitted multiple manuscripts for publishing, all of which were rejected, until in 2003 he got a call from Tor that wanted to buy one of his books, *Elantris*, which became his first novel in 2005. After *Elantris*, many of his books were published, among which was the first part of his projected ten books series *The Stormlight Archive*, *The Way of Kings*, in 2010. He was also chosen to finish Robert Jordan's epic series *The Wheel of Time*, which he completed by writing the last three books of the fourteen part series. Sanderson has been on the *New York Times* Best-Seller List fifteen times, and he is also the only author to make the short list for the David Gemmell Legend Award eight times in seven years. In 2011, he won the award for *The Way of Kings*. ("About Brandon.")

*The Stormlight Archive* is Sanderson's epic fantasy series that is planned to span over ten novels, the first five being a set and the last five as a sequel to the first five (Sanderson 2013). *The Stormlight Archive* currently consists of three books, *The Way of Kings* (2010), *Words of Radiance* (2014) and *Oathbringer* (2017) and a novella, *Edgedancer* (2017), the events of which chronologically take place between *Words of Radiance* and *Oathbringer*. *The Stormlight Archive* is set in Sanderson's Cosmere, which is a fictional universe of his creation where many of his other books also take place. *The Stormlight Archive* is set on a planet called Roshar, which is periodically ravaged by deadly, but foreseeable Highstorms always traveling from east to west. The planet is inhabited by multiple human races, most importantly the Alethi, whose conflict with Roshar's nonhuman race, Parshendi, is one of the major plot lines of the series so far. In addition to humans and the Parshendi, Roshar is full of spren. Spren are creatures that, according to Jasnah Kholin, one of the most knowledgeable characters in the series, "are elements of the Cognitive Realm that have *leaked* into the physical world. They're concepts that have gained a fragment of sentience, perhaps because of human intervention" (*WoR* 42). Most spren are insignificant, for instance, windspren fly with strong winds, flamespren dance in flames. However, there are ten types of spren that can form a bond with a human, which enables the human to tap into the magic system of Roshar by inhaling Stormlight and being able to Surgebind, that is, to manipulate natural forces such as gravity. The main focalizing characters of the first three books, Kaladin, Shallan Davar and Dalinar Kholin, are all Surgebinders, although none of them know it at the time the story begins. I will now give the plot synopses for the novels.

*The Way of Kings* begins with a prologue where Szeth-son-son-Vallano, later known as the Assassin in White, kills the king of Alethkar. The Parshendi immediately claim responsibility for the assassination, which leads to the Alethi starting a war against the Parshendi on the Shattered Plains. The novel takes place five years later mostly on the Shattered Plains, whereto the main character, Kaladin, is taken as a slave in the beginning of the book. In the war camps at the Shattered Plains, Kaladin is sold and put into the bridge crews, which is the worst line of work possible. The bridge crews carry heavy wooden bridges for miles in order to eventually charge to a chasm in a rain of Parshendi arrows from the other side of the chasm without armor or support from the soldiers, which makes them more or less arrow fodder. Dalinar is one of the highprinces waging war on the Shattered Plains. He is trying to keep the kingdom together by guiding his nephew, Elhokar, who is the king of Alethkar. Dalinar has visions that make his family, and himself, question his sanity.

Shallan is in Kharbranth, a city far away from the Shattered Plains, trying to become the ward of Dalinar's niece, Jasnah, in order to save her family. At the end of the novel, Kaladin and his bridge crew save Dalinar and his army from certain death, and Dalinar buys all the bridgemen from another highprince's, Sadeas's, army with his priceless Shardblade, and makes Kaladin the captain of his personal guard. Jasnah accepts Shallan as her ward after both of their Surgebinding abilities are revealed.

In the second novel, *Words of Radiance*, Shallan makes her way to the Shattered Plains after surviving a shipwreck that seemingly costs everyone else on the ship, including Jasnah, their lives. At the Shattered Plains, Shallan infiltrates an organization called the Ghostbloods, which she learns was behind the shipwreck. She also continues Jasnah's research into the parshmen being Voidbringers, the ancient enemy of the Knights Radiant, and the location of Urithiru, the mythical city of the Knights Radiant. Dalinar is planning an expedition to the center of the Shattered Plains in order to end the war, which has turned into a competition for the highprinces, once and for all. Kaladin gets tangled up in an assassination attempt of Elhokar, while also being in charge of protecting him. Dalinar launches the expedition, and they find the Parshendi army summoning an Everstorm, an "evil" equivalent of the ravaging Highstorms that go through Roshar periodically. Kaladin realizes why he needs to protect the king, not kill him, and saves him from the assassination attempt and immediately afterwards flies to the center of the plains and saves Dalinar from the Assassin in White. Meanwhile, Shallan finds the Oathgate that she was looking for, and saves the Alethi armies by transporting them into Urithiru, away from the two deadly storms.

At the beginning of *Oathbringer*, Kaladin flies into his hometown to check on his family after the unexpected Everstorm is believed to have caused all parshmen to turn into Voidbringers. He goes on a scouting mission in Alethkar, and finds that the parshmen, who are not all Voidbringers, are capturing the human cities after thousands of years of slavery. Dalinar is trying to bring all the human kingdoms together to fight the perceived threat caused by the Voidbringers, but his warmongering past makes it difficult for him to gain anyone's trust. Dalinar sends Shallan and Kaladin, as a part of a rescue crew, to Kholinar, the capital city of Alethkar, in order to open the Oathgate there and save the city before the parshmen capture it. Kaladin and Shallan are unable to save the city, and when they use the Oathgate, instead of taking them to Urithiru, the Oathgate sends them to Shadesmar, the Cognitive Realm, where the spren live. Kaladin learns that Dalinar is in danger, and they travel to the cognitive realm side of Thaylenah, a city where Dalinar and his armies take on the

Voidbringers in the first real battle between the humans and Voidbringers. Kaladin and Shallan are unable to enter the Physical Realm due to the Oathgate in Thaylenah being closed between the Realms, but Dalinar does the impossible and unites the three realms by virtue of possessing part of the power of the dead “god”, Honor. The humans are able to fight back and save Thaylenah from the Voidbringers.

Because very little research has been done on the series due to it being published during the 2010s, in the next section I will not present earlier critical approaches, instead I only discuss the theoretical background for the thesis.

### 1.3 Brief Theoretical Background

In the analysis for readers’ empathy for the characters, I rely on Suzanne Keen’s theory of narrative empathy from *Empathy and the Novel*. Keen defines empathy as feeling what others feel, and sympathy as feeling a supportive emotion about someone else’s feelings (Keen 5). In the third chapter of her book, called “Readers’ Empathy”, Keen gives fifteen proposals on both readers’ empathy for fictional characters and the effect of scholarship on reading. Most of Keen’s proposals are applicable to *The Stormlight Archive*, but there are some that do not match exactly with the series. Her first proposal is that “*empathy for fictional characters may require only minimal elements of identity, situation, and feeling, not necessarily complex or realistic characterization*” (Keen 69). This is certainly true for *The Stormlight Archive*, since readers empathize with Kaladin immediately in his first focalizing chapter, even if the readers themselves are not slaves, which relates to Keen’s second proposal, that character identification invites empathy even if the reader and character are obviously different (Keen 70). Her fourth proposal states that “*empathetic responses to fictional characters and situations occur more readily for negative feeling states*” (Keen 72), whereas I would argue that, especially in Kaladin’s case, the readers empathize more strongly with the positive feelings caused by the heroic moments instead of his negative feeling states. On the other hand, the empathetic effect of the heroic moments is influenced by the “*recognition of prior (or current) experience*” (Keen 80), because structurally the moments remind the readers of movie montages.

Keen (93) writes that the two most commonly nominated features of narrative fiction associated with empathy are *character identification* and *narrative situation*. One of the techniques of characterization that has been tested is that “character’s involvement in a suspenseful situation provokes physiological responses of arousal in readers even when they



disdain the quality of the narrative” (Keen 94). In *The Stormlight Archive*, this relates to Kaladin’s and Dalinar’s moments of heroism that are the culminating points for the suspense, and at the same time the most powerful emotional elements in the series. She also mentions anachronies, which in the series have a major impact on character identification in the form of analepses in each novel. Concerning narrative situation, Keen (98) argues that because first-person voice creates the illusion of reality, it might be less effective in evoking empathetic response from readers, because the work’s fictionality unleashes readers’ emotional responsiveness. Based on Keen’s text it is hard to say whether or not first person narration might evoke a stronger empathetical response than the narrated monologue, also known as free indirect discourse, Sanderson uses, but it is agreed that “narrated monologue has a strong effect on readers’ responses to characters” (Keen 96), which is the case in *The Stormlight Archive* as well.

In analyzing readers’ sympathy for the characters, I use Howard Sklar’s definition of narrative sympathy from his study *The Art of Sympathy in Fiction: Forms of Ethical and Emotional Persuasion*. He lists four elements necessary for sympathy: 1. Awareness of suffering as “something to be alleviated,” 2. Frequently, the judgement that the suffering of another is undeserved or unfair, 3. Negative, unpleasant or uncomfortable feelings on behalf of the sufferer, and 4. Desire to help (Sklar 35). I disregard the last element, since the fictional characters are beyond the readers’ ability to help. Sklar (34) himself also states that the active, altruistic, response is not always the result of the emotions. Because of the stories chosen for Sklar’s study and the “daily life” understanding of the word sympathy as feeling sorry for someone, Sklar confines his discussion to sympathy for negative emotions. In my thesis, I need to use a broader definition of sympathy and include “feeling for the joys of others” (Sklar 26), since readers’ feel sympathy for the joys and accomplishments of the characters in *The Stormlight Archive*.

In his study of narratives, Sklar uses Sternberg’s theory of “primacy and recency effects” (57). Sternberg present four strategies of rhetorical control in *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction*, the first is the “natural” manner, which “involves no dynamic informational manipulation” (98), in other words, the primacy effect, that is, the first impression, created in the beginning of the story is not altered by any future recency effects. The next two strategies involve recency effects that manipulate the primacy effect, but do not “demolish the reader’s first impressions” (Sternberg 99), like the last one, “the rise and fall of first impressions” (Sternberg 99), does. The analepses in the second and third novel of *The*

*Stormlight Archive* create recency effects for the characters Shallan and Dalinar respectively. All of Sklar's four selected stories for his study are different from *The Stormlight Archive*, because they are short stories and they involve "unsympathetic" characters (Sklar 4) that he studies. While the influence of the primacy and recency effects on the characters in his chosen stories is not directly comparable to the characters in *The Stormlight Archive*, the analepses are able to have influence on readers' perception of the characters and therefore create recency effects.

## 2. Kaladin

Kaladin is the main protagonist of the first novel. Because of the way the first novel begins, the readers' empathy is directed toward Kaladin due to the narrative situation (Keen 93). The first section of the novel is a prelude to the whole series, which takes place 4500 years before the prologue, where the Assassin in White kills the king of Alethkar. The first actual chapter of the novel is set five years after the prologue, and the focalizing character in the first chapter, titled "Stormblessed", dies at the end of the chapter. The second chapter takes place later, this time eight months after the first chapter, and the "Stormblessed" soldier from the first chapter, Kaladin, who is the focalizer, is suddenly a slave branded with a *shash* glyph, that is, dangerous. The following chapter is also set in a different place, focalized again on a new character, Shallan, in the city of Kharbranth. This means that, including the prelude and the prologue, the first five chapters in the novel are all set in different places, which entails that when the fourth chapter is focalized again on Kaladin, it immediately gives the sense that he is at least one of the protagonists in the story, as he is the first with two focalizing chapters (in addition to being the title character of the first chapter). He is also the most frequent focalizing character in *The Way of Kings*, and the character with the most focalizing chapters in the whole series up to date, followed by Shallan and Dalinar ("The Stormlight Archive/ Statistical analysis").

Readers' empathy toward Kaladin is built in three ways all relating to character identification (Keen 93), in addition to the narrative situation. The first one is that he is the hero of the story. This aspect of him is evident even in the first chapter of the book, where his men call him "Stormblessed." There are several moments, or events, in the story that emphasize his heroic aspect. These events will be discussed in chapter 2.1. The second element that enables readers to empathize with the character is his relationship with Syl, the honorspren he creates a bond with in order to become a Knight Radiant. Through Kaladin's relationship with Syl, whom only he sees most of the time, readers get an additional way of entering into his thinking, in addition to him being the focalizer. Because Syl is a honorspren, she is supposed to know what is right (*WoR* 511), which means that she acts as a sort of moral compass for Kaladin. At times, Kaladin's relationship with Syl also evokes readers' sympathy toward Kaladin. The empathy readers feel for Syl also influences the empathy, as well as the sympathy, readers feel for Kaladin. These aspects will be discussed in chapter 2.2. The third element is the one the narratives of all three characters share, analepses. For Kaladin, the analepses are in the first novel, which means that the analepses do not create a similar recency

effect for him as they do for Shallan and Dalinar. The analepses in Kaladin's case help build the character, and they give readers another window into his thinking, which in turn enables character identification. The questions Kaladin struggles with in the analepses, situated mostly in his youth, are returned to later when he is making decisions that lead to his heroic action in the story. The analepses are discussed in chapter 2.3.

## 2.1 Kaladin as the Hero

In his first focalizing chapter in *The Way of Kings*, Kaladin is a slave. However, already in the first chapter of the novel, the readers have been given the image of a man who has been named "Stormblessed" due to his luck and battle prowess, and is revered by his soldiers. This image enables the readers to immediately sympathize with him, even if it is not yet known why he was made a slave. His first act of "heroic" behavior already comes in this chapter, when he, prompted by Syl and his father's voice: "*Can you really leave him, son? Let him die when you could have helped?*" (*WoK* 57), tries to save a fellow slave, because his nature will not let him ignore the slave.

Kaladin's qualities as a good person and an amazing soldier are established in the first few chapters of the series. He is also called a hero multiple times in the series, not least by Dalinar, and the king of Alethkar. His behavior throughout the series is heroic, as he wants to protect everyone, and most of the time does that. However, certain moments in the story are what really complement the empathic nature of his heroism. Readers get a glimpse of this in one of the analepses, when he grabs a quarterstaff for the first time:

Something changed in that moment. Kal felt an energy as he held the weapon, an excitement that washed away his pain. He spun, smashing the staff into one of Jost's hands.

Jost let go with that hand, screaming. Kal brought his weapon around and slammed it into the boy's side. Kal had never held a weapon before, never been in a fight any more dangerous than a wrestling match with Tien. But the length of wood felt *right* in his fingers. He was amazed by how wonderful the moment felt. (*WoK* 254)

There is clearly something special about Kaladin, as even in his youth he instinctively knows how to use a weapon. His goodness is also emphasized in the scene, because he stops his attack once he realizes that he has hurt Jost (*WoK* 254). The first real moment of virtuosity, however, comes when Kaladin performs a kata with a spear in the chasms in front of his bridgemen.

His bridge crew has been assigned to scavenging duty, which means that they lower themselves into the deep chasms of the Shattered Plains and look for anything valuable left by soldiers, who have died in the clashes with the Parshendi. Kaladin picks up a spear and reminisces about his time as a soldier, and is taunted by his men:

It appeared that there was something that would pull the bridgemen out of their silent stupors: loathing for Kaladin. Others began talking, calling gibes.

“... his fault we’re down here ...”

“... wants to run us ragged during our only free time, just so he can feel important ...”

“... sent us to carry rocks to show us he could shove us around ...”

“... bet he’s never held a spear in his life.” (*WoK* 397–398)

Kaladin listens to their taunts for a while, but then, shuts them out and goes elsewhere in his mind:

And Kaladin was in another place.

He was listening to Tukks chide him.

He was listening to Tien laugh.

He was hearing his mother tease him in her clever, witty way.

He was on the battlefield, surrounded by enemies but ringed by friends. He was listening to his father tell him with a sneer in his voice that spears were only for killing. You could not kill to protect. (*WoK* 398)

He performs an advanced kata, a training exercise “meant to work the muscles and make you practice the basic jabs, thrusts, and sweeps” (*WoK* 399), so amazing that it makes his crew stare at him in stunned silence, and then jump back to work once he orders them, which they would have not done before. His second in command, Teft, remarks that “I’ve *seen* katas before. But never one like that” (*WoK* 399). Even though Kaladin does not do anything heroic, he is just performing a training routine, the level of skill he does it with makes him seem like a hero, and that he can actually save his bridge crew, as he has promised himself he will.

Sklar compares readers’ immersion into fiction to a “dream state” (19), that is, the experience of reading is comparable to dreaming. I would argue that, while these moments can be considered dream-like because of the way they are written, a more apt comparison would be a movie montage. The changing of pace by using the short paragraphs that refer to different times or locations immerse the readers into the moment and transport them in their minds with Kaladin into these places. It is as if readers can see Tukks chiding Kaladin, followed by his brother laughing, his mother teasing and his father’s line from an analepsis: “His father snorted. ‘That’s like trying to stop a storm by blowing harder. Ridiculous. You

can't protect by killing'" (*WoK* 155–156). The effect is stronger than it would be if the sentences would all be lumped into a single paragraph. Then Kaladin springs into action and performs the kata. The scene can be compared to a superhero movie, where the hero finally finds the strength inside him to defeat the villain, even if, in this case, Kaladin does not fight anyone. The familiarity helps readers empathize with the moment and creates a stronger relationship to Kaladin.

The superhero comparison is more apparent in the moments when he says the Second and Third Ideals of the Knights Radiant. Before saving Dalinar and his army in *The Way of Kings*, he runs out of stormlight and is so exhausted that he cannot even stand. His men continue without him knowing that their effort is doomed. Again, Kaladin thinks about the past, this time all the men he has lost. Then his brother's fate is finally revealed to the readers. Kaladin being unable to protect him is his biggest regret, and now he is watching his men run toward certain death. The same immersive effect, like with the kata earlier, is created again through single sentence paragraphs:

"All I wanted to do was protect them," he whispered. "That's why I've come. The Words, Kaladin."

"They're going to die.

I can't save them. I—"

Amaram slaughtered his men in front of him.

A nameless Shardbearer killed Dallet.

A lighteyes killed Tien.

*No.* (*WoK* 924–925)

He gets up, picks up a spear for the first time after the kata, and jumps alone to the other side of the chasm from the bridge his men are putting in place. The climax to the moment happens when Kaladin whispers the Second Ideal of his Order of the Knights Radiant, Windrunners: "I will protect those who cannot protect themselves" (*WoK* 926), which itself is already a heroic ideal:

A *crack* shook the air, like an enormous clap of thunder, though the sky was completely clear. Teft stumbled back—having just set the bridge in place—and found himself gaping with the rest of Bridge Four. Kaladin *exploded* with energy.

A burst of whiteness washed out from him, a wave of white smoke. Stormlight. The force of it slammed into the first rank of Parshendi, tossing them backward, and Teft had to hold his hand up against the vibrancy of the light.

"Something just changed," Moash whispered, hand up. "Something important." (*WoK* 926)

The effect of the moment is emphasized by the fact that Teft is the focalizer, as the perspective is given through a spectator, instead of Kaladin himself. He fights like a "living

storm of steel, wood, and determination” (*WoK* 926), and saves Dalinar, his son, and what is left of their army after Sadeas’s betrayal.

The Third Ideal is even more “cinematic.” He has effectively broken his oath with Syl by agreeing to help assassinate Elhokar, which has caused him to lose his Surgebinding powers, and he also believes that Syl is dead as a consequence. In this scene, the montage element does not come from glimpses into the past. Kaladin is deadly injured and realizes why it is right to protect Elhokar, even though he is a bad king. He hears a conversation between Syl and the Stormfather, the de facto leader of the spren:

Cold air. Rain.

Yelling? Very distant? He knew that voice. . . .

“Syl?” Kaladin whispered, blood on his lips. “Syl?”

Nothing. (1013)

—

Shouting. Kaladin heard it now, as if it were closer.

*He is mine!* a feminine voice said. *I claim him.*

HE BETRAYED HIS OATH.

—

*I don’t care.*

HE WILL KILL YOU.

—

*The Words, Kaladin.* That was Syl’s voice. *You have to speak the Words!*

I FORBID THIS.

YOUR WILL MATTERS NOT! Syl shouted. YOU CANNOT HOLD ME BACK IF HE SPEAKS THE WORDS! THE WORDS, KALADIN! SAY THEM! (*WoR* 1013–1015)

The conversation happens in the “background” of the scene, almost like a voice-over, while Kaladin struggles to stand up to his friend Moash and his associate, whose aim is to kill Elhokar. Because of what happened when Kaladin said the Second Ideal, the readers’ immersion is even increased in expectation. Additionally, the fact that Kaladin finally realizes that he is supposed to protect Elhokar instead of removing him like he would a leg shattered beyond repair (*WoR* 751) makes the moment even more empathic, as most readers have probably been waiting for the realization for hundreds of pages. Again, short paragraphs are used to emphasize the moment, especially when he says the Third Ideal:

“I will protect even those I hate,” Kaladin whispered through bloody lips. “So long as it is right.”

A Shardblade appeared in Moash’s hands.

A distant rumbling. Thunder.

THE WORDS ARE ACCEPTED, the Stormfather said reluctantly.

“Kaladin!” Syl’s voice. “Stretch forth thy hand!” She zipped around him, suddenly visible as a ribbon of light.

“I can’t . . .” Kaladin said, drained.

“*Stretch forth thy hand!*”

He reached out a trembling hand. Moash hesitated.

Wind blew in the opening in the wall, and Syl’s ribbon of light became mist, a form she often took. Silver mist, which grew larger, coalesced before Kaladin, extending into his hand.

Glowing, brilliant, a Shardblade emerged from the mist, vivid blue light shining from swirling patterns along its length.

Kaladin gasped a deep breath as if coming fully awake for the first time. The entire hallway went black as the Stormlight in every lamp down the length of the hall winked out.

For a moment, they stood in darkness.

Then Kaladin *exploded* with Light.

—

Behind Kaladin, frost crystalized on the ground, growing backward away from him. A glyph formed in the frost, almost in the shape of wings.

—

“The Knights Radiant,” Kaladin said softly, “have returned.” (*WoR* 1015)

Once again, Kaladin explodes with light as a consequence of the Ideal. The visual effect of the scene is increased with the wings that are crystalized from the frost. The scene is followed by Kaladin saving Dalinar from the Assassin in White, where again the visual elements are used to emphasize Kaladin’s ascension to a full Knight Radiant:

And then, like a falling star, a blazing fireball of light and motion shot down in front of Dalinar. It crashed into the ground, sending out a ring of Stormlight like white smoke. At the center, a figure in blue crouched with one hand on the stones, the other clutching a glowing Shardblade.

His eyes afire with a light that somehow made the assassin’s seem *dull* by comparison, he wore the uniform of a bridgeman, and bore the glyphs of slavery on his forehead.

The expanding ring of smoky light faded, save for a large glyph—a swordlike shape—which remained for a brief moment before puffing away.

“You sent him to the sky to die, assassin,” Kaladin said, Stormlight puffing from his lips, “but the sky and the winds are mine. I claim them, as I now claim your life.” (*WoR* 1025–1026)

Kaladin being like a “falling star, a blazing fireball of light” and the glyph that forms after his landing are elements that can, once again, be associated with a superhero, the landing especially is very superman-like.

The association of the elements help readers empathize with Kaladin, and the importance of the scenes make readers feel elated sympathy for Kaladin. The kata enables him to gain his bridge crew’s respect and bring some hope into their miserable lives, which Kaladin struggles with before the kata. The Second Ideal not only helps him save Dalinar, but he realizes that he



has to do something, he has to be better than the others: “*Somebody has to start, son. Somebody has to step forward and do what is right, because it is right. If nobody starts, then others cannot follow*” (WoK 913). The Third Ideal and realizing he has to save Elhokar make him realize that “This was the man he wanted to be” (WoR 1014). He wants to be the man, who protects people. All these events are a long way coming in the novels, built up by Kaladin figuring out what is right and what is wrong, which will be discussed in the next section. However, they also create the opportunity for Sanderson to enable the readers sympathize with Kaladin in *Oathbringer*, when the moment for the Fourth Ideal comes.

The scene of the Fourth Ideal is similar to earlier ones, except the effect is much stronger. The build up to the Fourth Ideal begins during the journey in Shadesmar, when readers are given short analepses of Kaladin’s life as a soldier and a slave. There are also few instances when windspren, which are very rarely seen in Shadesmar, circle around Kaladin, indicating that the Fourth Ideal will finally give him his Knights Radiant Shardplate. When the time comes for the Fourth Ideal, Kaladin is down on his knees in Shadesmar after running out of Stormlight when fighting four of the fused, the Voidbringer’s Surgebinders. Kaladin thinks about his men, and “of course, he thought of Tien” (OB 1129). However, the montage element of the scene is much greater this time, because the chapter has ten different focalizers, most of them men who are fighting for their lives in Thaylenah, not the least Dalinar, who is having a mental battle with Odium, the god of the Voidbringers. Kaladin needs to say the Words of the Fourth Ideal in order to get to Thaylenah to protect Dalinar. The build up to the coming explosion of light is much bigger than before, which is why readers sympathize greatly with Kaladin when he cannot say the Words, because he is not strong enough. The failure might disappoint readers and make Kaladin less empathetic, especially as the Fourth Ideal would finally reveal how Shardplates, the armor of Knights Radiant, are formed. The epigraph for chapter 86 reads: “*My spren claims that recording this will be good for me, so here I go. Everyone says I will swear the Fourth Ideal soon, and in so doing, earn my armor. I simply don’t think that I can. Am I not supposed to want to help people?*” (OB 823) However, as evident from the other Windrunners’ hesitation from thousands of years ago, the failure to say the Words does not come as a total surprise. Earlier, Kaladin froze in a battle in Kholinar, because he saw his friends fighting his friends and did not know who to protect, and therefore is mentally damaged all their time in Shadesmar. However, the way the chapter reads, the failure hits readers very hard, and brings forth a lot of sympathy for Kaladin.

All these events as singular scenes strengthen readers' empathy for Kaladin with the familiarity and character identification they bring. The scenes create for Kaladin an image of a hero with nearly unmatched abilities and superlative Ideals. This increases readers' empathy for the character, because readers can relate him to other similar, already familiar, heroic characters. The inability to say the Fourth Ideal, on the other hand, makes Kaladin's character more relatable in another way, because it makes him seem more human, and not just a heroic figure. The struggles that Kaladin goes through leading up to these moments and saying the Ideals are discussed in the next chapter.

## 2.2 Kaladin's Relationship with Syl

Kaladin's relationship with Syl begins in his first focalizing chapter. She is the reason he tries to save one of the other slaves, rather than just being resigned to his own fate as a slave. Syl asks him "So why don't you fight?" (*WoK* 55) when he is his usual self, wallowing in misery, and seeming like he has given up on hope of a better life. Once Kaladin is assigned to the bridge crews in the Shattered Plains and he realizes the hopelessness of the situation, he is again miserable, and goes to the "honor chasm" to kill himself. However, Syl again questions his lack of fighting spirit and says that Kaladin could help the other men in the bridge crews, and since Kaladin considers them already dead, failure would not actually matter (*WoK* 160). At this point, the readers, or Kaladin, do not yet know what Syl is, but already she can be seen as a positive influence on Kaladin. Kaladin's regular mood is not very relatable, since his thoughts are quite dark at times, and even if readers can empathize with him, his thoughts might make readers want to distance themselves from him.

The readers' relationship with Kaladin and Syl grows stronger as their bond is strengthened, and since Syl is supposed to know what is right and what is wrong, at times it is easier to empathize with her than it is with Kaladin. In the first novel, the two do not have fundamental differences in their opinions. Syl functions as Kaladin's aide, so to speak, on his journey toward being a Knight Radiant, although for most of the novel, Kaladin is not aware of what the goal of his journey is. Syl echoes many of the readers' thoughts, especially when Kaladin is in danger of turning back into the "wretch, who has given up because he sees no alternative" (*WoK* 576). She tells Kaladin that he is on the right path and should continue on it, even if he does not know why:

"Journey before destination," Syl whispered on Kaladin's shoulder. "I like that."

"Why?" Kaladin asked, kneeling down to untie the dead bridgeman's sandals.

“Because,” she replied, as if that were explanation enough. “Teft is right, Kaladin. I know you want to give up. But you can’t.” (*WoK* 608)

She is also a large part of the reason why Kaladin chooses to help Dalinar’s army in the end of *The Way of Kings*, even though he does not owe them anything:

She stared eastward, her expression horrified, eyes wide and sorrowful. It was the face of a child watching a brutal murder that stole her innocence.

Kaladin turned and slowly looked in the direction she was staring. Toward the Tower.

Toward Dalinar Kholin’s desperate army. (912)

—  
“Are windspren attracted to wind,” she asked softly, “or do they make it?”

“I don’t know,” Kaladin said. “Does it matter?”

“Perhaps not. You see, I’ve remembered what kind of spren I am.”

“Is this the time for it, Syl?”

“I bind things, Kaladin,” she said, turning and meeting his eyes. “I am honorspren. Spirit of oaths. Of promises. And of nobility.” (913)

She implies that the reason she chose Kaladin to bond with is that she sees him as noble and honorable. The readers also recognize this aspect of Kaladin, in part because of his constant desire to protect people and because his actions as the leader of his bridge crew. Such instances, and the fact that Syl wants Kaladin to help Dalinar, are what makes readers empathize with Syl, and the empathy readers feel for Kaladin is increased due to the fact that readers also empathize with Syl, who also empathizes with Kaladin.

The empathy readers feel for Syl may occasionally make readers feel less empathy and sympathy for Kaladin. This is especially true in the second novel, where Kaladin’s bad decisions effectively kill Syl, before Kaladin swears the Third Ideal and renews the bond. Assassinating the king obviously goes against the honor and nobility Syl and their bond represents, but Kaladin does not see that because of his blind hatred of the lighteyes. In Alethkar, people who have light eye color, “lighteyes,” are higher ranking than people with dark eye color, “darkeyes.” For example, after Dalinar makes Kaladin captain of his guard, he cannot give Kaladin a higher title than captain, because a higher rank “would cause a whole mess of problems” (*WoK* 984), even though the amount of men Kaladin commands effectively makes him a battalionlord. Although Kaladin has reasons for his hatred of lighteyes, which will be discussed in the next chapter, it clouds his judgement. He has a hard time of trusting Dalinar, who gave up his priceless Shardblade for the bridgemen, and is probably the most honorable man in Roshar. He also has a problem with Dalinar’s son, Adolin, the stupidity of which Shallan points out:

“Yes, because *he* is the one storming around with alternating scowls and insults,” Shallan said. “Adolin Kholin, the most difficult man to get along with on the Shattered Plains. I mean *look* at him! He’s so unlikable!”

She gestured with the pencil toward where Adolin was laughing with the darkeyed water boys. The groom walked up with Adolin’s horse, and Adolin took his Shardplate helm off the carrying post, handing it over, letting one of the water boys try it on. It was ridiculously large on the lad.

Kaladin flushed as the boy took a Shardbearer’s pose, and they all laughed again. (*WoR* 813–814)

Kaladin is determined to hate lighteyes, no matter what, and Syl is determined to make him see the error of his ways, because it is leading him to the wrong path. The seething hatred of lighteyes is so evident that it makes Syl afraid of telling Kaladin that she is basically a lighteyed spren: ‘Kaladin glared at Syl, who pulled down into the oversized poncho she’d bought. “Azure is a bounty hunter,” she said in a small voice. “And I’m . . . I’m kind of like a spren lighteyes. I didn’t want you to know. In case you hated me, like you hate them”’ (*OB* 957–958). The fact that Syl believes that Kaladin could hate her is a really low point for Kaladin in the eyes of the readers. Most of the time his hatred of lighteyes is an unlikable feature, but the fact that he can make Syl afraid of telling about herself to him makes him really unsympathetic for readers. However, Syl herself alleviates the situation by making a joke right after the revelation, and because the empathy for her, readers may not judge Kaladin so harshly.

Syl’s worry for Kaladin increases readers’ empathy and sympathy for her, as well as readers’ sympathy and antipathy for Kaladin. In addition, Kaladin’s brooding nature is an unsympathetic element Syl addresses throughout the series, which adds to the empathy readers feel for Syl, which has an effect on readers’ feelings for Kaladin. Both elements, Syl’s worry and Kaladin’s nature, are especially evident when Kaladin is thrown to prison by Elhokar in *Words of Radiance*. Kaladin protects Adolin, when he is fighting a disadvantaged duel against four men. Kaladin and Adolin manage to win the duel and Adolin asks Elhokar for a boon in the form of a duel against Sadeas, which was their plan all along. Kaladin sees his opportunity and asks for a boon for himself, as he wants a duel against Amaram. Elhokar instead throws him in prison, because the boons are only for lighteyes to ask. Once again, Kaladin thinks that lighteyes are to blame:

“This,” Kaladin said, looking at her, “is what comes of trusting lighteyes. Never again, Syl.”

“Kaladin . . .”

He closed his eyes, turning and lying down on the cold stone bench.

He was in a cage once again. (*WoR* 679)

In prison, he thinks that killing Elhokar is the right thing to do, which Syl does not like at all:

“All right, fine. He’s not. But the king is. Admit it, Syl. Elhokar is a terrible king. At first he *lauded* me for trying to protect him. Now, at the snap of his fingers, he’s willing to execute me. He’s a child.”

“Kaladin, you’re scaring me.”

“Am I? You told me to trust you, Syl. When I jumped down into the arena, you said this time things would be different. *How* is this different?”

She looked away, seeming suddenly very small.

“Even Dalinar admitted that the king had made a big mistake in letting Sadeas wiggle out of the challenge,” Kaladin said. “Moash and his friends are right. This kingdom would be better off without Elhokar.”

Syl dropped to the floor, head bowed. (*WoR* 726)

This line of thinking is what leads to Syl’s death, although spren do not die completely like humans do. Kaladin becomes less sympathetic, and even less empathetic, for the readers, because he should be able to realize that he is wrong. His actions, which have up to this point strengthened the bond between him and Syl, are now weakening it. He has trouble infusing stormlight, which he realizes is an effect of the bond weakening, but still thinks that he is right and Syl is wrong, because spren have a “stupid, simplistic morality” (*WoR* 801). Syl dies while protecting Kaladin from the fall into the chasms, and only comes back when Kaladin swears the Third Ideal. Because the readers empathize with Syl, who is a lovable character, Kaladin effectively killing her makes him very unsympathetic. Also, even if readers think that Kaladin is right in thinking that Elhokar should not be the king, what it does to Syl makes it harder to empathize with him.

In turn, in *Oathbringer* when the rescue party is taken to Shadesmar, readers’ empathy for Syl, as well as for Adolin, makes Kaladin more sympathetic. Kaladin is broken by the events in Kholinar, where he saw his friends fighting his friends and could not choose who to protect. His demeanor, after landing into Shadesmar, also evokes readers’ sympathy for him:

The bridgeman knelt on the stone, head bowed, shoulders slumped. Storms ... Adolin had been forced to carry him away from the battle, numb and broken. Looked like that emotion had caught up to him again.

Kaladin’s spren—Adolin could only guess that was the identity of the pretty girl in blue—stood beside him, one hand resting protectively on his back. “Kaladin’s not well,” she said. (*OB* 857)

Syl and Adolin both try to cheer up Kaladin during their journey in Shadesmar, because they feel sympathy for him. Syl even encourages Kaladin to pursue Shallan’s affections, because one of her personas is clearly into Kaladin, and Kaladin likes Shallan as well. Her actions enhance readers’ sympathy for Kaladin, and Kaladin’s refusal to pursue Shallan in turn

enhances readers' empathy for him, because the readers can see that Adolin is right for Shallan. Empathy and sympathy for Kaladin is also enhanced by his worry for Syl, who is taken prisoner by other honorspren in order to prevent her from fleeing again.

Kaladin's relationship with Syl has a major effect on readers' sympathy and empathy for him. Because Syl is a honorspren and therefore knows right from wrong, we as readers expect morally correct decisions from the heroic Kaladin. So, when his decisions are in line with what Syl wants him to do, the readers empathize and sympathize with him more, whereas when his decisions go against what Syl wants, he becomes less empathetic and less sympathetic, and readers may even feel antipathy toward him. Readers' emotions are also affected by Syl's feelings toward Kaladin, because readers also empathize with Syl, and therefore share her feelings.

### **2.3 The Effect of the Analepses**

The analepses of the first novel take place during Kaladin's youth, apart from the final ones that tell the events of the novel's first chapter, "Stormblessed", with Kaladin as the focalizer, and the betrayal he keeps referring to throughout the novel. The major theme in the analepses is the question of whether he should be a soldier, like he wants to, or a surgeon like his father. Kaladin reflects on this choice in almost all of the analepses. Eventually the choice is in a way taken away from him, because after he makes the choice to become a surgeon, he instead volunteers for the army in order to protect his brother, who is drafted. This back and forth between the two choices takes place simultaneously (but not chronologically) with his growth into a Knights Radiant, which is a bit of both surgeon and soldier, during his time in Sadeas's bridge crews.

As previously mentioned, the analepses do not create a recency effect in terms of readers' emotions because of their location in the first novel of the series. Rather, with the analepses Sanderson fortifies the primacy effect the readers get from the first chapters Kaladin features in. With the help of the analepses, Sanderson builds the character by explaining the reasons for Kaladin's constant pondering of what he is supposed to do, and by giving reasons to his hatred of lighteyes. The analepses in some parts also work against the heroic first impression of Kaladin, however, the effect does not come straight from the analepses. The effect comes later through Kaladin's thoughts, when he realizes that some of the things he has learned during the analepses are wrong, like with the assassination of Elhokar. Before he chooses to protect Elhokar, he practices spear forms in order to calm himself, because he cannot figure

out how his decision to assassinate Elhokar is wrong in Syl's eyes. He remembers something that was said to him when his brother died: "Gotta do what you can to stay alive, son. Turn a liability into an advantage whenever you can. Remember that, if you live" (*WoK* 924). He realizes that it is the wrong way of thought, because it led to his brother's death, and now he is applying it to his own actions:

Tien's own squadleader had sacrificed the untrained to gain a moment's advantage.

That squadleader had spoken to Kaladin after it was all over. *Gotta do what you can to stay alive. . . .*

It made a twisted, horrible kind of sense.

It hadn't been Tien's fault. Tien had tried. He'd still failed. So they'd killed him.

Kaladin fell to his knees in the water. "Almighty, oh Almighty."

The king . . .

The king was Dalinar's Tien. (*WoR* 977)

This realization eventually leads him to the Third Ideal, but, even before the words of the Ideal come to him, he chooses to protect Elhokar, because he realizes it is the right thing to do. Even if the readers might not always agree with Kaladin's thinking, there are many points in the story where his contemplation leads him to the morally right decision, which increases readers' empathy for him.

Another example of contemplation and analepses playing a part in the heroic moments for Kaladin is before the Second Ideal. Kaladin feels that he does not owe Dalinar anything, he does not need to try to save him at the expense of his and his men's lives. However, his father's words echoed from one of the analepses, in which he also says something that goes against Kaladin's reasoning to kill Elhokar, which is repeated when he is in prison, make him rescue Dalinar:

"I owe you nothing, Kholin."

And his father's voice seemed to whisper a reply. *Somebody has to start, son. Somebody has to step forward and do what is right, because it is right. If nobody starts, then others cannot follow.*

Dalinar had come to help Kaladin's men, attacking those archers and saving Bridge Four.

*The lighteyes don't care about life, Lirin had said. So I must. So we must.* (*WoK* 913)

The references to the analepses and Kaladin's reasoning that lead to the heroic moments in the story make the moments more satisfactory to the readers, because not only do the readers get to read the "cinematic" events, the readers also get to read what has led up to them. This is emphasized when Kaladin finally makes the correct decision and advancing on his journey with the Knights Radiant.

By telling the story of Kaladin's youth, the analepses also give the background to Kaladin's hatred of the lighteyes. In the series, as mentioned earlier, lighteyes are higher in status than darkeyes. This is not true of every nation, but in Alethi society nearly every lighteye has a higher rank than any darkeye. In his youth, Kaladin imagines that lighteyes are like the heroic soldiers from the stories: "Brightlord Amaram! The noble lighteyed general who watched over northern Alethkar. Kal wanted so much to see a *real* lighteye, not stuffy old Wistiow. A soldier, like everyone talked about, like the stories were about" (*WoK* 155). His own experience of lighteyes in the analepses is limited to Wistiow, his daughter Lalar, who is Kaladin's friend, and Roshone, who takes over as citylord when Wistiow dies. Roshone torments Kaladin's family, because he thinks that Kaladin's father stole a lot of spheres, which is the currency of Roshar, from Wistiow after his death in order to finance Kaladin becoming a surgeon. Roshone is part of the reason why Kaladin hates lighteyes, especially because he makes Amaram draft Kaladin's younger brother into the army, which leads to Tien's death.

However, the major reason for the hatred is Amaram himself. In the analepsis that portrays the events of the novel's first chapter focalized through Kaladin, Kaladin saves Amaram's life by killing a Shardbearer, which is one of Kaladin's heroic feats, since a regular soldier killing a Shardbearer with a Shardplate and a Shardblade is something that happens mostly in legends. By law, Kaladin owns both the plate and the blade, because he killed the Shardbearer, but Amaram repays his debt for his life to Kaladin by taking the plate and the blade for himself, killing all Kaladin's men and branding Kaladin a slave. Amaram is the lighteye who according to Kaladin, is "supposed to be better than the others!" (*WoK* 704)

The analepses enable the readers to empathize, at least in part, with Kaladin's hatred of the lighteyes. He has been wronged many times, and has a reason for his hatred. One of Keen's proposals can be inversely related to Kaladin's hatred of lighteyes. Keen proposes that "*readers' perception of a text's fictionality plays a role in subsequent empathetic response, by releasing readers from the obligations of self-protection through skepticism and suspicion*" (88). The whole concept of lighteyes being better than darkeyes is very similar to racism, which might make the readers want to distance themselves from taking sides, even though, in this case, taking Kaladin's side would be taking the side of the oppressed. The fictionality of the element in this case is lessened by the fact that it is so close to real life racism, which might have the opposite effect on the readers, and make the readers protect themselves instead. The other issue with empathizing with Kaladin's hatred is that of the four



most recurring focalizing characters, Kaladin is the only darkeyes, and the readers also empathize with the other three, Shallan, Dalinar and Adolin. Dalinar seems like the most honorable man there is, which is actually the reason why Kaladin finds it hard to trust Dalinar, because he reminds him of Amaram. Adolin is very likable, and even though Shallan has her own issues, she is clearly a good person. Kaladin's prejudice against the three just based on their eye color is one of his most unlikeable traits, and it makes it harder to empathize with him.

The most important of the analepses is the chapter "Of Aids and Milp", because it creates a link between Kaladin's youth and some of his major decisions in the story, even though "Sas Nahn", the chapter where readers learn what Amaram did to Kaladin, might have a more immediate impact on the readers' emotions. The words he hears in his mind that lead him to save Dalinar at the end of the first novel are said by his father in "Of Aids and Milp", after his father saves their lighteyed citylord Roshone's life. Kaladin himself would have let the citylord die on the surgeon's table, because "some people—like a festering finger or a leg shattered beyond repair—just needed to be removed" (*WoK* 586). This is also his reasoning to why Elhokar, another "bad" lighteyes, should be killed, and it is repeated in the second novel at the end of the chapter "The One Who Killed Promises", in which he is in prison. The link between the analepsis and the events gives the readers a better understanding of his decisions, which makes it easier to empathize with Kaladin.

The role of the analepses in the first novel differ from the analepses of the following novels. In *The Way of Kings*, the analepses build and fortify the primacy effect to Kaladin's character, whereas in the the two other novels the analepses have a recency effect on Shallan and Dalinar respectively.

## 2.4 Concluding Remarks

The main ways readers' emotions for Kaladin are created are his character, both the heroic and the unsympathetic sides of it, and the heroic moments he has in the series. His character is influenced by the analepses that explain one of his most unsympathetic features, which is his hatred of lighteyes. The analepses also help understand the decisions he makes during his journey to become a Knights Radiant. Kaladin's relationship with Syl affect the readers' emotions for Kaladin, both positive and negative, through the empathy and sympathy the readers have for Syl. The heroic moments have the strongest effect on readers' empathy and

sympathy for him because of the immersion through the moments' "visual" elements and because of the elation readers' feel for Kaladin during these moments.

### 3. Shallan

Shallan differs from the two characters due to her narrative situation. In the first novel, she does not interact with other focalizing characters like Kaladin and Dalinar do, and even in the other two novels, she does not have a relationship with anyone, in which she shares her thoughts similarly as the two other main characters do. Kaladin's relationship with Syl affects readers' emotions for him, and Dalinar's relationship with his family and his spren, the Stormfather, affect the readers' view of him. Shallan's spren, Pattern, comes closest to a relationship, in which she shares her feelings, but even that relationship is different to what Kaladin and Syl have, because Pattern is not concerned with morality but lies. Shallan differs from the other two characters also because she does not have similar heroic moments like Kaladin and Dalinar do. The only one that comes close is when she drives one of the Unmade away from Urithiru, but even then she is terrified (*OB* 310). Readers' empathy and sympathy for Shallan is created differently. The growth of Shallan's character and Shallan herself plays a major part in evoking readers' emotions toward her, and it is discussed in chapter 3.1. The first novel gives the image of a naive and timid young girl, who is not as relatable or easily empathized with as the other two characters. This image is altered by the recency effect created by the analepses that give information about her past, which makes the readers' revise their opinions about the character. The analepses are discussed in chapter 3.2. The third element that has a major effect on readers' emotions toward Shallan is her inner turmoil, which is discussed in chapter 3.3. All three characters struggle with major questions throughout the series, but for Shallan the effect of the confusion is stronger, because her questions about her identity make her change who she is in a drastic way.

#### 3.1 Shallan's Growth and Readerly Empathy

The first time we as readers meet Shallan, she is in a city called Kharbranth, hoping to become the ward of Jasnah Kholin, one of the most powerful and infamous women in the world (*WoK* 69). Even in the first paragraph of her first focalizing chapter we are introduced to the image of a country girl far from home:

Though she'd often dreamed of traveling, she'd expected to spend her early life sequestered in her family's manor, only escaping through the books of her father's library. She'd expected to marry one of her father's allies, then spend the rest of her life sequestered in *his* manor. (*WoK* 61)

This image is enhanced by her somewhat childish imagination: "She'd imagined him getting that scar on his jaw in a furious sea battle with pirates. The day before, she'd been

disappointed to hear it had been caused by loose tackle during rough weather” (*WoK* 62). Her behavior also has characteristics that sometimes make her seem younger than she is. She blushes constantly, which, in fairness, several of the characters do, in all three novels, but Shallan does it so often that it becomes part of her traits, rather than being an occasional occurrence, as with the other characters. She is also very naive because of her upbringing, which is evident in many of her actions. She treats one of the sailors, Yalb, automatically (and accidentally) as a servant intermediary when paying her porter for transport (*WoK* 70). Yalb also needs to “rescue” her from book vendors, who are about to charge her many times the books’ worth in spheres, which is, in part, possible because Shallan has *never* used money before her current trip. The biggest evidence for her naivety is, however, the fact that she falls in love with Kabsal, an ardent (member of the Vorin church) who cannot marry, and who ends up poisoning her while trying to assassinate Jasnah, which is why he starts spending time with Shallan in the first place.

These characteristics themselves are not necessarily negative in the way they affect the readers. Many readers probably can empathize with arriving in a city or a place that is totally different from what they are used to, or by the fact that most of us have been naive, or might still be, at some point of our lives. However, the characteristics can have a negative effect on readers, because the other two characters, Kaladin and Dalinar, do not possess these characteristics, and might be more relatable because of that. Although Dalinar shows some naivety at the end of *The Way of Kings*, when he gets betrayed by Sadeas after trusting him, his misplaced trust comes from his visions, not his inexperience. He also learns from his mistake immediately, unlike Shallan at times. Kaladin is not naive either. He has trusted lighteyes in the past and it has caused him so much misery that he knows never to trust them again, even to a point where his mistrust has no basis anymore. Both characters are really different from Shallan in terms of youthful traits, which highlights Shallan’s blushes and sometimes adolescent behavior even more, especially since Kaladin is only two years older than Shallan. Because of these differences between Shallan and the two other main characters, and because of the fact that Kaladin and Dalinar have considerably more focalizing chapters in the first novel, forty-six and twenty-eight respectively to Shallan’s fifteen (“The Stormlight Archive/Statistical analysis”), Shallan is less relatable than the other two characters.

Shallan’s relationship with Jasnah, however, has the biggest impact on making her seem adolescent in the eyes of the readers. Jasnah not only treats her like a young girl, she addresses her as “child” regularly (Kabsal does this as well, at first). Their relationship as a

not “important enough to wait for” ward-to-be and “one of the most powerful women in the world” (*WoK* 63) also creates a contrast that emphasizes Shallan’s youth. The two women have a teacher–student relationship that not only emphasizes Shallan’s inexperience, but also enables readers to empathize and sympathize with Shallan. All readers can relate to a teacher–student dynamic, which makes it easier to empathize with Shallan, whereas some of the aspects of Jasnah as a teacher make readers sympathize and empathize with Shallan. During the initial “testing” of Shallan Jasnah asks Shallan what she knows about different fields of study, and it is easy to sympathize with Shallan when she remarks how unreasonable Jasnah’s standards are:

“Have I not a right to make reasonable demands of my potential students, Miss Davar?”

“Reasonable? Your demands are about as *reasonable* as the ones made of the Ten Heralds on Proving Day! With all due respect, Brightness, you seem to want potential wards to be master scholars already. I may be able to find a pair of eighty-year-old ardents in the city who *might* fit your requirements. They could interview for the position, though they may have trouble hearing well enough to answer your questions.” (*WoK* 88)

Because of Shallan’s skillset consisting of visual arts, which Jasnah thinks are a frivolity (*WoK* 91), Jasnah cannot accept Shallan as her ward, which makes readers feel sympathy for Shallan. The teacher–student dynamic also does the opposite at times. While Jasnah’s standards can be very high, her treatment of Shallan is fair, which makes Shallan’s complaints less relatable. She also highlights some of the unfavorable aspects of Shallan’s behavior, which makes might make readers sympathize with Jasnah instead. In her response to Shallan’s criticism to her standards above, she asks:

“I see,” Jasnah replied. “And do you speak with such pique to your parents as well?”

Shallan winced. Her time spent with the sailors had loosened her tongue far too much. Had she traveled all this way only to offend Jasnah? (*WoK* 88)

Shallan’s reaction to Jasnah’s reproach does not do her any good in the eyes of the readers either. While as a single event it might be an appropriate reaction, it is just one of many reactions to avoid any kind of conflict, which is best evidenced by her constant need to apologize, which is commented on by Jasnah and Kabsal. The constant apologizing makes her less sympathetic, because it is excessive and therefore may be annoying.

While it is harder to feel sympathy for someone who is clearly naive, especially as readers do not yet know about Shallan’s past, it does not take away the fact that readers feel sympathy for Shallan when she is recovering and feeling miserable, after she has been poisoned and Jasnah learns about Shallan stealing her Soulcaster. However, the sympathy for

the misery does not last very long. This is not because readers would feel that Shallan does not deserve sympathy, but because Shallan herself sets her own misery aside, as she starts to wonder about something more important: “How had Jasnah survived? How?” (*WoK* 965)

This is where Shallan’s personal growth really begins. She realizes that Jasnah has eaten the same poisoned bread as Shallan and Kabsal, but she was not poisoned, which leads her to deduce that Jasnah has Soulcast the poisoned bread as well as the jam, which was the antidote, before she knew that Shallan had swapped their Soulcasters. This would mean that Jasnah had Soulcast herself, not with the device, since the device she had was broken. This leads to Shallan confronting Jasnah about her ability to Soulcast, and then revealing that she can do it as well, since she had also Soulcast earlier with the Soulcaster she thought was working, but was in fact, a fake. When she demonstrates her ability to Jasnah, she needs to speak a powerful truth in order to Soulcast, which is when she reveals to the Cryptics, which is a type of spren that once bonded gives the ability to Soulcast and Lightweave, and to the readers that “I’m a murderer. I killed my father” (*WoK* 968). Interestingly, while the revelation about her father probably comes as a shock to the readers, her calm and composed manner during the scene with Jasnah, and what the events of the scene mean for Shallan as a character, greatly lessens the effect the murder might have on readers, so the recency effect of the revelation is not as strong as it could be. In the scene, Shallan confronts Jasnah properly for the first time, which is highly out of ordinary behavior for her, she enters Shadesmar consciously for the first time, and she finally comes to a conclusion on what she should do, a question she has been wondering for most of the novel:

“I want to be part of it,” Shallan found herself saying.

“Excuse me?”

“Whatever you’re doing. Whatever it is you’re researching. I want to be part of it.”

“You have no idea what you’re saying.”

“I know,” Shallan said. “I’m ignorant. There’s a simple cure for that.” She stepped forward. “I want to know, Jasnah. I want to be your ward in truth. Whatever the source of this thing you can do, I can do it too. I want you to train me and let me be part of your work.” (*WoK* 969–970)

Even though Shallan has already decided to follow the original plan and deliver Jasnah’s Soulcaster to her brothers before the assassination attempt, it was not what she really would have wanted to do. The leap which her character takes during this chapter is enormous, and it makes readers sympathize in a positive manner with her and feel joy for her, as it is the first time Shallan really seems to know what she wants to do.

The analepses in *Words of Radianance* have a clear recency effect on Shallan's character. The primacy effect that is created during the first novel, when readers judge Shallan knowing only that her parents are dead, but not how they died, and little about her past, is in retrospect somewhat unfair toward her character. Shallan's behavior in *The Way of Kings* is much more understandable and appropriate to readers once the events of her past are known. Her timidity and naivety can be explained by her father, who created a toxic environment for her and her brothers, and especially for Shallan, since every "wrong" deed she did would be punished, but she would not be the one who would receive the physical punishment. In light of this, it is understandable that she avoids all conflict and apologizes constantly. Her sometimes annoying use of witticisms can be explained by it being one of the only things that brought light into hers and her brothers' lives when they were younger. The readers may even feel sympathy for Shallan because of their own uninformed negative feelings toward her. Whether or not Sanderson intended such primacy and recency effects to occur when he was writing *The Way of Kings*, the changes in her character have a considerable impact on the empathy, and especially sympathy, readers feel for her during *The Words of Radianance*. Her naivety and timidity already start to diminish toward the end of the first novel, and by the end of the second novel she is a totally different woman. Even Shallan realizes the changes even after arriving at the Shattered Plains in the chapter "A New Woman," however, at that point she has only changed to some extent.

### **3.2 The Recency Effect of the Analepses**

In *Words of Radianance*, in addition to the analepses, the aspect of Shallan that evokes the most emotions from readers is the growth of her character, which begins in the confrontation with Jasnah at the end of the first novel. This is partly due to the fact that she appears in only fifteen chapters in *The Way of Kings*, whereas in *Words of Radianance*, she is the focalizing character in almost four times as many chapters. Additionally, the nine flashback chapters that portray her past not only give information about her character, but also explain why she was the naive and timid girl she is in *The Way of Kings*. The focus of her inner turmoil also changes as compared to the first novel. In *The Way of Kings*, she is concerned about what she should do, whereas in *Words of Radianance*, she is more concerned about who she should be. That is, she cannot fully be herself due to the tragic events of her youth, which she has blocked from her mind: "You always knew, a voice whispered deep inside of her. You grew up with horrors, Shallan. You just won't let yourself remember them" (WoR 37). While the

occasional inner turmoil during the first novel might distance the readers from Shallan emotionally, as it might be difficult to identify with the mind of a love sick teenager, in the second novel the distance might arise from a different reason. Even though character identification appears to require only minimal elements (Keen 69), in the case of Shallan, the fact that she cannot “identify” with herself might also make it harder for readers to do so, an effect that is even further enhanced in the third novel.

Most of the time, she gives the image of a happy girl, while keeping her negative feelings inside her. Readers learn more and more that the image is fake, which she also knows herself:

“You barely know me,” Shallan said. “How can you be so certain I’ve never done things like this?”

“Because you aren’t broken,” Tyn said, expression distant.

“Perhaps I’m faking.” (*WoR* 359)

Tyn, who is her new “teacher” after Jasnah’s tragic death in a shipwreck in the beginning of the second novel, thinks that Shallan has not gone through experiences that “wrench the soul, rip it apart” (*WoR* 359), but readers already know at this point that Shallan was present when her mother died and that she killed her father. Even if readers do not yet know what actually happened the night her father died, it was clearly something that wrenches the soul: “This was terrible, this was awful, but nothing, *nothing*, could compare to what she’d had to do the night her father died. She had survived that. She could survive this” (*WoR* 117).

The horrible experiences she has endured are also the reason why her spren, Pattern, chose her to bond with, because her mind did not break, even though it should have:

“You came to me because of the Voidbringers,” Shallan said, moving closer to the trunk, bloodied rag forgotten in her hand.

“Yes. Patterns . . . we . . . us . . . Worry. One was sent. Me.”

“Why to me?”

“Because of lies.”

She shook her head. “I don’t understand.”

He buzzed in dissatisfaction. “You. Your family.”

“You watched me with my family? That long ago?”

“Shallan. Remember . . .”

Again those memories. This time, not a garden seat, but a sterile white room. Her father’s lullaby. Blood on the floor.

*No.*

She turned away and began cleaning her feet again.

“I know . . . little of humans,” Pattern said. “They break. Their minds break. You did not break. Only cracked.”

She continued her washing.

“It is the lies that save you,” Pattern said. “The lies that drew me.” (*WoR* 215–16)



Even though her mind only “cracked,” she is severely traumatized by the events of her youth, and thinking that she could do nothing to help Jasnah on the ship does not ease her troubles, although she does not block it from her mind in the same way she does the earlier horrors. Every time she starts to think about her mother and what happened to her, her mind in a way shuts down, as evidenced by the “*No*” in the quotation above. This mental block not only shows the readers the gravity of her issues, it is also a way by Sanderson to heighten the suspense of the narrative and make readers more interested in Shallan’s past. However, even if the lies are what saved her from breaking, in order to progress further as a Knight Radiant, which she is aspiring to be, she needs to acknowledge the truth of her past:

“You spoke oaths.”

Shallan froze.

*Life before death* . . . The words drifted toward her from the shadows of her past. A past she would not think of.

“You live lies,” Pattern said. “It gives you strength. But the truth . . . Without speaking truths you will not be able to grow, Shallan. I know this somehow.” (*WoR* 257)

The truth that is easier for her to speak is the truth about what happened the night her father died: she killed him. Ever since her mother’s death in the first analepsis, her father’s behavior grows worse and worse each flashback. He beats his servants, his new wife, even his sons – the only person he does not for some reason lay a hand on is Shallan. When Shallan sees that he has gone too far by killing her stepmother, she poisons him. The moment Shallan sees that her stepmother is dead, a thought comes into her mind: “*So it has come to this*, Shallan thought, feeling a strange, detached calm. *The lie becomes the truth*. This was Shallan’s fault” (*WoR* 869). Ever since Shallan’s mother died, everybody has blamed her father for the murder of her and her lover. However, Shallan has never said he did it, she in fact several times says that he did not kill her. So when he kills his wife, the lie everyone has told in a way becomes the truth. However, the truth Shallan cannot speak is that not only did she kill her father, she killed her mother as well:

The world ended, and Shallan was to blame.

—

Father gathered her into his arms, and she felt her skin squirming. No. No, this affection wasn’t right. A monster should not be held in love. A monster who killed, who murdered. *No*.

—

Father carried Shallan over the body of a woman in blue and gold. Little blood there. It was the man who bled. Mother lay facedown, so Shallan couldn’t see the eyes. The horrible eyes.

—

They passed Father's strongbox set into the wall. It glowed brightly, light streaming from the cracks around the closed door. A monster was inside. (*WoR* 136)

The fact that Shallan is the reason everything with her family went wrong is revealed even in the first analepsis, but readers are left with uncertainty. A eleven-year-old girl could blame herself for something she has not done, and what the "monster" in the strongbox is is not explained, so even if Shallan calls herself "a monster who killed," her involvement is not explicitly stated. When Shallan finally confronts the truth about what happened, readers learn that the monster in the strongbox was Shallan's spren, Pattern.

Mother took the knife and came for Shallan.

And then . . . And then a sword in Shallan's hands.

"He let everyone believe that he'd killed her," Shallan whispered. "That he'd murdered his wife and her lover in a rage, when I was the one who had actually killed them. He lied to protect me."

"I know."

"That secret destroyed him. It destroyed our entire family." (*WoR* 1059)

Shallan used Pattern as a Shardblade when defending herself – which also happens with Tyn earlier in the novel – against her mother, who tried to kill her apparently because of her ability to Lightweave. His father took the blame, which gradually destroyed him and their family.

The analepses have a strong effect on readers' sympathy for Shallan. It is difficult to not feel sympathy for someone who has to try to bring light into a family that has a dead mother, a disturbed and violent father, a gambling brother, a brother who likes to hurt animals, a brother who has decided to kill himself and a brother who might do something about the gloom, but is almost never around. What is more, Shallan has to do so after being "cracked" herself – she does not speak for five months after her mother's death (*WoR* 268). Nevertheless, just as Kaladin in *The Way of Kings*, somewhere within her she finds the spark that makes her try to change things for the better. Two years after her mother's death, Shallan starts to wonder:

She did not want to contradict him. He had been good to her. He was always good to her. Yet, shouldn't someone do something?

Helaran might have. He'd left them.

*It's growing worse and worse. Someone needs to do something, say something, to change Father. He shouldn't be doing the things that he did, growing drunk, beating the darkeyes . . .* (*WoR* 451)

In the analepsis, she takes the first small step by coming up with words of a conversation between her father and their highprince's son (that she cannot actually hear), and ending it with a bad pun, making her brothers laugh. At the end of the conversation, Shallan has begun

to lessen the gloom: “Well, you should read more of those books, small one,” Balat said. “It seems brighter in here for it” (*WoR* 455). In the next analepsis, when the family is attending a festival, she advances her brother’s, Balat’s, love interest without his knowledge and gives her depressed youngest brother math problems to work on. Wikim is very miserable and ready to kill himself:

Wikim turned away from her, looking out the window toward the trees, away from the fair. “You can’t fix us, Shallan. Jushu will destroy himself. It’s only a matter of time. Balat is becoming Father, step by step. Malise spends one night in two weeping. Father will kill her one of these days, like he did Mother.”

“And you?” Shallan asked. It was the wrong thing to say, and she knew it the moment it came out of her mouth.

“Me? I won’t be around to see any of it. I’ll be dead by then.” (*WoR* 524)

However, Shallan’s efforts seem to make a difference, for her brother and for her as well:

He scribbled at the mathematical problems she’d left.

He was smiling.

Warmth. That warmth she felt, a deep glow, was like the joy she had known before. Long ago. Before everything had gone wrong. Before Mother. (*WoR* 527)

Even if these efforts might seem small for readers, but for Shallan every step is important, and the analepses really make readers sympathize with Shallan.

In this analepsis, Shallan also meets a messenger, who readers later learn is, at present time, the King’s Wit, a man who makes fun of those the king cannot, at the Shattered Plains. The man, also known as Hoid, encourages her to keep going with her efforts to bring light into darkness, and in the next analepsis, she remembers his words, “Keep cutting at those thorns, strong one . . . Make a path for the light . . .” (*WoR* 561) when she is saving her brother, Jushu, from debt collectors. For avid Sanderson readers, the fact that Hoid encourages Shallan can increase their empathy for Shallan, because Hoid is a character that features in several of Sanderson’s novels that take place on other worlds in his Cosmere. Hoid also has similar encouraging scenes with Kaladin, one in *The Way of Kings* and one in *Words of Radiance* during his miserable time in prison, which may also affect readers emotions toward Shallan through Hoid.

In the analepses Shallan struggles with a similar problem that Kaladin struggles with, as everyone around him keeps dying, and he is the one who always survives, whereas in Shallan’s case his father hurts everyone around her, but not her. This eventually leads to her poisoning her father after realizing that he has gone too far by killing Shallan’s stepmother. Readers can empathize with her and understand her decision, even though murder is not

something people usually can empathize with. Somehow everything her father has done previously has not been enough for Shallan, but once she sees her stepmother's dead body, she has had enough:

Not a crime of the moment. He'd murdered her as punishment.

*So it has come to this*, Shallan thought, feeling a strange, detached calm. *The lie becomes the truth.*

This was Shallan's fault. (*WoR* 869)

She poisons a goblet of wine and hands it to her father, and once her father falls, she feels the same coldness she felt on the day she lost her mother. Even though she goes into shock, she stands by her decision when they realize that the poison was not strong enough to kill their father. She wraps her necklace around his neck and twists, while singing the same lullaby he sang to her in the first analepsis just after her mother's death:

Shallan had to watch as his eyes bulged out, his face turning colors. His body trembling, straining, trying to move. The eyes looked to her, demanding, *betrayed*.

Almost, Shallan could imagine that the storm's howls were part of a nightmare. That soon she would awaken in terror, and Father would sing to her. As he'd done when she was a child . . . (*WoR* 873)

Shallan's actions are excusable, however cold blooded she is during the scene. She seems to know that what she is doing is, at the same time, wrong and right. She thinks that everything that happened has been her fault and feels that she needs to be the one to end it as well. However, when we finally learn the truth about her mother, the fact that even though her actions started the ruin of her family, it is hard not to feel sympathy for Shallan, because she was just defending herself, and is not really to blame.

The analepses tell the story of Shallan's horrendous youth, where she first kills her mother causing the ruin of her whole family and eventually has to kill her father too, because of the way he treats his family. Some of the events of the analepses are so disturbing that some readers might feel *personal distress* "that causes a turning-away from the provocative condition of the other" (Keen 4) because of their empathy, which is arguably what Shallan herself feels because of the events. The analepses evoke readers' sympathy for Shallan and have a recency effect on the image of Shallan created during the first novel. The recency effect created by the analepses matches Sternberg's third model of rhetorical control, because the first novel contains "warning-signals and anticipatory cautions" (Sternberg 99) in the form of hints to Shallan's past that make the contents of the analepses less surprising, and therefore reduce the strength of the recency effect. The analepses also explain why Shallan is so broken

that her inner turmoil leads her to create multiple personas for herself, which is discussed in the next chapter.

### 3.3 Shallan's Inner Turmoil

Shallan experiences inner turmoil in all three novels. In *The Way of Kings*, Shallan struggles with what she should do in Kharbranth. Her original plan was to become Jasnah's ward, swap her broken Soulcaster with Jasnah's working one, and come up with an excuse for returning home. Shallan, however, has problems with the plan. For one, stealing the Soulcaster is harder than she thinks, especially as Jasnah does not even accept her as her ward at first. But, more importantly, Shallan falls in love with studying. When her brother comments via spanreed (a device that, once attached to pen and paper, copies the writing of a linked spanreed elsewhere) that it must be difficult for Shallan to be away so long, she reflects:

Yes, it was difficult. Difficult not to fall in love with the freedom, difficult not to get too absorbed in her studies. It had been only two months since she'd convinced Jasnah to take her as a ward, but already she felt half as timid and twice as confident.

The most difficult thing of all was knowing that it would soon end. Coming to study in Kharbranth was, without doubt, the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to her. (*WoK* 456)

She really enjoys her time in Kharbranth, and stealing the Soulcaster and returning home would not only put an end to it, but she would also betray Jasnah, whom she admires: "Once again, she felt a stab of guilt. Jasnah was taking great pains to instruct her in scholarship, and she was going to reward the woman by stealing her most valuable possession and leaving a broken replacement. It made Shallan feel sick" (*WoK* 462). When she finally has the chance to steal the Soulcaster, she cannot do so, even if it would mean saving her family, but does it later anyway as a consequence of Jasnah's reckless display of Soulcasting.

She experiences similar inner turmoil when thinking about her relationship with Kabsal. Since he is an ardent, there cannot really be a proper relationship between them. However, he is the first man she has ever thought about in a romantic way. Because of her secluded upbringing he "was practically the only man near her age that she'd ever talked to outside of her father's careful supervision" (*WoK* 507). However, just as with the theft of the Soulcaster, her desire to learn and study is more important to her than a relationship with Kabsal would be. The "relationship" with Kabsal adds to her naive image, as Jasnah even warns Shallan at one point that Kabsal probably has ulterior motives (*WoK* 511), yet Shallan ends up being betrayed by him anyway.

Like the relationship with Kabsal, the plan to steal the Soulcaster does not help her image in the minds of readers, since Jasnah does nothing that warrants any kind of bad behavior toward her. Even in the “murder” of the footpads that causes Shallan to steal the Soulcaster, Shallan herself later absolves Jasnah of guilt, once she has considered the philosophical questions related to the event. The contrast between the two characters also makes Shallan look worse, since she herself as the focalizing character creates an almost divine image of Jasnah due to the constant praise of her wisdom and beauty in Shallan’s thoughts. This constant praise of Jasnah and belittling herself – “As for his praise of her supposed beauty, she took that for what it was. A kind, if overstated, mark of affection” (*WoK* 65) – is just the beginning of the problems she has with self-identification.

During the early part of the second novel when traveling with slavers after the shipwreck, she realizes how useful the illusions from her Lightweaving, her ability as a Knights Radiant, can be: she can make others see her as different, but she can also make herself see her as different, feel different, or even be different, as later evidenced by her alter ego, Veil:

“Your disguise is gone,” Pattern noted.

Red hair. Shallan gasped, then immediately shoved her safehand into her pocket. The darkeyed con woman that Tyn had trained [Veil] could go about half-clothed, but not Shallan herself. It just wasn’t right.

It was also stupid, and she knew that, but she couldn’t change her feelings. (*WoR* 497)

This skill is something she almost abuses, although understandably. Why would she not use her ability to Surgebind to her advantage? Nevertheless, she realizes that she cannot always rely on her Lightweaving to make others see her as something she is not: “But capturing Adolin’s attention with illusions would lead her down a difficult path. She couldn’t wear an illusion always, could she?” (*WoR* 555) Because he is her betrothed, Adolin is the one person she cannot use her skill on, as it might lead to some awkward situations later. She also shows that she is not as naive as she used to be, after using her Lightweaving to convince deserters to help her: “She pretended these men were heroes, but had no illusions about how quickly they could change coats in the wrong circumstances” (*WoR* 310). However, as she realizes herself, she is still a little out of place with some of her schemes, when she tries to pass as a darkeyes as Veil:

Her mark was worth two hundred and fifty times the cost of the treat. Even in her family’s strained state, this wouldn’t have been considered much money to them. But that was on the level of houses and estates, not the level of street vendors and working darkeyes.

“Uh, I don’t think I can change that,” the woman said. “Er . . . citizen.” A title given to a wealthy darkeyes of the first or second nahn.

Shallan blushed. How many times was she going to prove just how naive she was? (*WoR* 487-488)

Readers can see that Shallan trying to be something she is not causes her difficulties. In her dealings with the dangerous organization called Ghostbloods, she always appears as Veil. During her first meeting with Mraize, the apparent leader of the group, she is terrified, and does not even consider the possibility that she might be followed after the meeting, still showing her naivety, until Pattern alerts her. Once she has completed her first task for the organization, she accidentally reveals most of her amazing mnemonic capability (she has effectively eidetic memory) and her drawing skill, even though she has decided to keep them a secret, since they are a clear link to Shallan. During the meeting, she gets caught up with the excitement, and again not having considered what might happen, the consequences are evident after the meeting. This time, she is not followed, as she hides inside an illusion, but her coachman is killed: “Briefly, while watching Mraize’s excitement over her art, she’d wanted to like the man. Well, she’d best remember this moment. He’d allowed these murders. He might not have been the one to slit the coachman’s throat, but he’d all but assured the others it was all right to remove her if they could” (*WoR* 635). She seems to forget that she is not as capable as Tyn, who trained her for a while, just because she has created a persona like Tyn in Veil. These mishaps might make readers feel less empathy for Shallan, if they feel that she would not have made the same mistakes themselves.

At this point, the real reason why Shallan creates the second persona for herself is not yet revealed to readers. Earlier in the novel, Tyn has “figured out” that Shallan is only pretending to be Shallan Davar in order to try to pull a con on someone at the war camps. Instead of correcting Tyn, Shallan ponders: “Who would she be for this woman? Who did she *need* to be?” (*WoR* 312) It is not as if she is trying to hide her identity, everyone in the caravans knows who she is, so why would she *need* to be someone else? And why does she need to create Veil?

She creates Veil, because she cannot deal with the Ghostbloods as Shallan Davar. In a way, Shallan is just another persona she is portraying because she cannot handle her past. During a scouting expedition on to the plains, there is an assassination attempt on Dalinar. A bridge is collapsed, Adolin manages to save his Dalinar, but a lot of people fall down into the chasms. Kaladin and Shallan are the only two survivors, since they are the only ones who can infuse stormlight, which protects them from the fall. They have a long trek back into the war

camps and during the trek they talk about their pasts. Kaladin makes the same assumption about Shallan as Tyn:

“All right,” Kaladin said. “Here it is. I can imagine how the world must appear to someone like you. Growing up pampered, with everything you want. To someone like you, life is wonderful and sunny and worth laughing over. That’s not your fault, and I shouldn’t blame you. You haven’t had to deal with pain or death like I have. Sorrow is not your companion.” (*WoR* 838)

Because of the image Shallan portrays, Kaladin thinks that her life has been all smiles and sunshine, but a little later when she learns the truth, his reaction is maybe the most powerful in terms of readers’ emotion for Shallan in the whole novel:

He saw it in her eyes. The anguish, the frustration. The terrible nothing that clawed inside and sought to smother her. She knew. It was there, inside. She had been broken.

Then she smiled. Oh, storms. She smiled *anyway*.

It was the single most beautiful thing he’d seen in his entire life. (*WoR* 849)

Kaladin is miserable throughout the series, and even though he has suffered many losses in his life, his experiences do not really compare to what Shallan has had to go through, and still Shallan is able to smile when Kaladin cannot. Readers empathy for Kaladin in this scene influences readers emotions towards Shallan, and Kaladin’s stunned reaction affects the readers emotions for Shallan.

However, Shallan’s ability to smile is only possible because she has blocked her mother’s fate from her mind. She is lying to herself by creating the positive outward image and blocking her mother’s fate from herself, which is not genuine, and therefore affect readers’ emotions for her. The analepsis where Shallan kills her father comes after the chapter where Kaladin learns that Shallan is broken, but readers need to wait until the beginning of *Oathbringer* to learn how broken she truly is. Her belittling comparisons to Jasnah and the creation of Veil are only glimpses of the crisis she has with self-identification. In her first appearance in *Oathbringer*, she seems to be in a similar state of mind as she is in her first analepsis after her mother’s death, when she has not spoken in five months. In the analepsis, her brother, Helaran, brings her a sketchbook, which eventually saves her, and in *Oathbringer*, she is trying to get salvation from drawing again. However, she cannot get it anymore:

It meant she had to summon her Blade each time. The Blade she’d used to kill her mother. A truth she’d spoken as an Ideal of her order of Radiants.

A truth that she could no longer, therefore, stuff into the back of her mind and forget.

*Just draw.* (*OB* 93)



Since she had to speak the Ideal, which for her Order are Truths, at the end of *Words of Radiance*, she cannot block it from her mind anymore, and thus Shallan now effectively needs to be broken. This leads to her not only reverting more and more into Veil, but also to creating another persona for herself, Brightness Radiant. Brightness Radiant is modeled after her other teacher, Jasnah, and she can handle the things Shallan, or Veil, cannot: “When Adolin returned to the room a moment later, he found a poised, calm woman who wasn’t *quite* Shallan Davar. *Brightness Radiant is her name, she thought. She will go only by title*” (OB 162). Her problems with self-identification go so far that she cannot be herself even with Adolin, because he is teaching her to use her Shardblade, and Shallan cannot bear to wield Pattern because of her memories.

What Shallan is going through in *Oathbringer* makes readers sympathize with her. She is clearly in pain, because of her past and, at times, because her identity crisis. However, at the same time, her identity crisis makes it harder for readers to empathize with her most of the time. Not only do readers see that she is developing multiple personalities (and not just personas she portrays, she even seems schizophrenic at times), but the effect of the multiple personalities also seeps into the text. The chapter *Double Vision* begins with a single sentence paragraph “Shallan became Veil” (OB 190), and while she creates the illusion of Veil in the next paragraph, the personal pronouns “Shallan” and “she” are at many points replaced by “Veil,” creating the impression that she is switching between personas. This effect becomes more and more prominent as the novel progresses, and sometimes she is less Shallan than her other personas:

She turned herself back into Shallan right before she reached the tailor’s shop. Veil let go reluctantly, as she kept wanting to go track down Kaladin in the Wall Guard. He wouldn’t know her, so she could approach him, pretend to get to know him. Maybe flirt a little ...

Radiant was aghast at that idea. Her oaths to Adolin weren’t complete, but they were important. She respected him, and enjoyed their time training together with the sword.

*And Shallan ... what did Shallan want again? Did it matter? Why bother worrying about her?*

Veil finally let go. She folded her hat and coat, then used an illusion to disguise them as a satchel. She layered an illusion of Shallan and her havah over the top of her trousers and shirt, then strolled inside. (OB 733) (emphasis added)

The effect her personalities seeping into the text is very well done, and it leaves the readers worrying about her fate, even toward the end of the novel where she regains some of her “wholeness” once she starts to accept that she can be forgiven (by herself) for what she has done. During the third novel, her personas Veil and Brightness Radiant become so strong that

Shallan completely loses herself in them at times, and it scares her, which makes readers sympathize with her. On the other hand, while readers can still empathize with the thoughts of the different personas, empathizing with Shallan as a character becomes more difficult because it is harder for the readers to relate to her.

Shallan's inner turmoil differs from the other two main characters', because she does not have her "moments" where the turmoil culminates, like the other two characters do. In the first novel her inner turmoil weakens the readers' empathy for her, because her relationship with Kabsal is destined to fail and the theft of the Soulcaster is wrong. In the second novel, she starts her identity crisis, which escalates almost into schizophrenia in the third novel. This simultaneously makes readers sympathize with her and empathize with her less because of the effects of the multiple personas.

### **3.4 Concluding Remarks**

The readers empathy and sympathy toward Shallan differs from their emotions toward other two main characters. Unlike the other characters, readers' empathy and sympathy toward Shallan is created mostly through her own characteristics and actions, without having the same outside influence as the other two characters. Sanderson also does not use the same structural effects to affect readers' emotions toward Shallan, as he does with the other two characters' moments.

## 4. Dalinar

Readers' emotions toward Dalinar are evoked by his analepses and his "moments", in addition to the general character identification. Readers' first impression of Dalinar differs from the other two characters, because his first focalizing chapters are shared by his son, Adolin. We as readers immediately get two different perspectives on his character. The image of Dalinar as a "father figure" and a character on a level above others begins in the first focalizing chapter and is heightened throughout the series. This image and its effect on readers' emotions is discussed in chapter 4.1. The analepses of the third novel tell readers about Dalinar's past as the famous "Blackthorn". The analepses have a recency effect on Dalinar's character, which is discussed in chapter 4.2. Dalinar has moments similar to Kaladin's heroic moments, and their effect is discussed in chapter 4.3.

### 4.1 The Father Figure

Dalinar is the only one of the highprinces who is interested in ending the conflict with the Parshendi after five years of skirmishing. Most of the other nine highprinces are only interested in hunting chasmfiends, huge beasts that have chrysalis hearts, which contain large gemstones that can hold Stormlight inside them. Dalinar makes his soldiers wear uniforms at all times and adhere to the Alethi Codes of War, which the other highprinces do not expect from their soldiers. Dalinar also thinks he has visions given to him by the Almighty. The visions are kept secret from most people because he would immediately be thought as delusional, but also because the idea that they are from the Almighty is highly blasphemous, which is another reason to keep quiet in their religious society. These visions and the trust Dalinar puts in them can have an effect on the readers' emotions toward him, especially as they make him trust Sadeas, who clearly is not a trustworthy person. Dalinar is at present basically as exemplary as one can be, which makes Kaladin's hatred of lighteyes and his inability to believe in Dalinar's goodness an interesting dynamic. Kaladin has been treated very badly by lighteyes, whom he has trusted, in the past, and his hatred and distrust affects both Dalinar and Kaladin, as readerly antipathy may be formed toward Kaladin because Dalinar has done nothing that would warrant Kaladin's distrust. On the other hand, Kaladin's distrust toward Dalinar might create a nagging feeling in readers that he might not be that good after all. Dalinar, the greatest warrior in Alethkar, also infamously passed out in a drunken stupor when the Assassin in White killed his brother, the king of Alethkar. Furthermore, for some reason, he does not remember his dead wife at all. He knows that she

existed, but anytime somebody even mentions her name he kind of blacks out and hears only “*Shshshsh*” (*WoK* 886).

Readers are introduced to Dalinar during Part Two of *The Way of Kings*. Apart from being mentioned in the prologue and by Kaladin’s bridgemen in chapter 6 (*WoK* 22, 104), he only becomes part of the story in chapter 12, much later than the other two main characters. The other difference between Dalinar on the one hand and Kaladin and Shallan on the other is that the first few of his focalizing chapters are shared with another character, his son, Adolin, who is the first of the two to be the focalizer. The introduction to Dalinar’s character is created by the contrast between himself and his son’s opinions of his father, which seem to echo the first two mentions of Dalinar: “As he walked, Szeth was forced to step around Dalinar Kholin—the king’s own brother—who slumped drunken at a small table” (*WoK* 22) and “Aye. The best of men, the most honorable Shardbearer in the king’s army. They say he’s never broken his word” (*WoK* 104). The difference between Dalinar’s and Adolin’s views is not as drastic as the difference between the first two mentions of Dalinar, but throughout their joint chapters Adolin questions Dalinar’s actions, or specifically his inactions, whereas Dalinar acts carefully and reservedly because of his past deeds. The past deeds are something Adolin idolizes. However, Adolin, like the readers, does not know the extent of them and that they also eventually led him to the drunken stupor on the night of his brother’s assassination, for which he has not been able to forgive himself.

The interplay between Dalinar and Adolin affects readers’ view of Dalinar, especially when it comes to his visions:

It all made Adolin feel sick. Dalinar was the Blackthorn, a genius of the battlefield and a living legend. Together, he and his brother had reunited Alethkar’s warring highprinces after centuries of strife. He had defeated countless challengers in duels, had won dozens of battles. The entire kingdom looked up to him. And now this.

What did you do, as a son, when the man you loved—the greatest man alive—started to lose his wits?  
(*WoK* 185)

Adolin may think his father is the greatest man alive, but his current actions are far from what they should be. Additionally, he knows his father is having “episodes” where he claims that he sees things during highstorms (*WoK* 219). As readers we know that Dalinar is experiencing visions, not just seizures, which is all any other character can witness, even if we get inside the visions only later on. There is clear evidence even in Dalinar’s first chapters that he sees something, as there are multiple examples of something he has heard in his visions. Also, his

first focalizing part in the novel begins with the paragraph “*Unite them*” (WoK 186). The same paragraph repeats itself several times in his first chapters, as well as later in the book. It is the main idea he has received from his visions. At this point, readers can either believe Dalinar or think he is deranged.

I would argue that most readers believe Dalinar, and even empathize with him. First of all, someone seeing visions in a fantasy novel is not unusual. Second, Dalinar’s portrayal apart from the visions makes him the most reasonable character in the story so far, especially compared to the other characters in his first focalizing chapters. He lets his nephew, Elhokar, the king, win a contest against him, a contest the king foolishly started (WoK 188). He then heroically saves the king during a chasmfiend hunt gone wrong (WoK 209), and he seems to be the only one (only highprince at least) who cares about the lives of bridgemen:

“You should switch to bridges like his,” Elhokar said. “Your Majesty,” Dalinar said. “Sadeas’s bridges waste many lives.” (WoK 226)

Also, when Elhokar is in danger, Dalinar immediately snaps into action, as something changes inside him because “His brother’s son was in danger” (WoK 208). However, it is not only his actions, but also some of the word choices that make Dalinar seem almost like a father figure, and, in this sense, trustworthy to readers, as well as someone they can empathize with. In addition to Dalinar treating the twenty-seven-year-old king as if he were a foolish boy, he has to take care of his other son, Renarin, during the battle with the chasmfiend (WoK 207). In fact, Adolin even thinks that he is so magnificent with the Shardplate that he proves all other men *children* (WoK 209). On top of everything, his opinion of the war is much more mature than that of the other highprinces, even if his is not the Alethi way. They see the “war” as a contest between them, and have lost the true purpose of why they are at the Shattered Plains in the first place. Near the end of the novel, Dalinar even calls the other highprinces children, after “disciplining” the king once again (WoK 961).

Dalinar is the “father figure,” and not only because he is at least thirty years older than the two other main characters, Kaladin and Shallan. He seems to be the only responsible highprince, and somehow he constantly ends up being above all other characters. He is named the Highprince of War, meaning that he makes all the decisions concerning war over the other highprinces. Elhokar makes him accept the role of High King, that is to say, a king above kings. He is also the leader of the Knights Radiant, since he is the one who was chosen to unite them, because the visions were given to him, and because he is from the rare Order of

Bondsmiths, whose number is limited to three at a time due to their spren being unique in kind. All this elevates him above all the other characters, to an almost divine figure, which makes it harder to empathize with him, because his superiority makes him harder to relate with. What is more, the divine connotation makes him feel as though he does not need sympathy, because at times, it is hard to imagine that he could be suffering, which is a key element to sympathy. He has also met Roshar's all three "gods": Cultivation when seeking the old magic; Odium, the evil god, whom he has a mental battle with in Thaylenah; and Honor, who is dead, but the sliver of his existence that still exists is the Stormfather, who is Dalinar's spren. In the battle of Thaylenah, he more or less embodies Honor, which effectively makes him a divinity. One more thing that separates him from the other characters is that he is the author of *Oathbringer*, *My Glory and My Shame* in *Oathbringer*. He is also protected against Odium only by *The Way of Kings* (*Words of Radiance* is also a book in the story) in the battle of Thaylenah.

While Dalinar being a father figure is something readers can empathize with, all these characteristics that elevate him "above" the other characters make him less relatable and harder to empathize with. They also make him less sympathetic, at least toward negative emotions, because he is "better" than the others and should not be suffering.

#### 4.2 Analepses: The Blackthorn

Dalinar is a very reasonable man and a respected leader. Still, throughout the story people keep referring to the "Blackthorn", the man who he used to be. His son, Adolin, who is too young to have seen the Blackthorn in action, would like Dalinar to be the Blackthorn again instead of talking about his visions and the Knights Radiant:

It all made Adolin feel sick. Dalinar was the Blackthorn, a genius of the battlefield and a living legend. Together, he and his brother had reunited Alethkar's warring highprinces after centuries of strife. He had defeated countless challengers in duels, had won dozens of battles. The entire kingdom looked up to him. And now this.

What did you do, as a son, when the man you loved—the greatest man alive—started to lose his wits?  
(*WoK* 185)

He does get a glimpse of the Blackthorn when Dalinar heroically saves Elhokar from a chasmfiend, but normally Dalinar is careful and reserved. Dalinar himself thinks about the Blackthorn too: "This was a time the Alethi needed the Blackthorn, not an old, tired soldier who fancied himself a philosopher" (*WoK* 370). He does "let the Blackthorn loose" (*WoK*

783), when he saves Sadeas, who has fallen on the battlefield, but other than that, he keeps that side of him subdued. The readers are not told much about what the Blackthorn is like, other than that he is a great warrior. As both the “good” and the “bad” characters want him to be the Blackthorn again and Dalinar does not want to be him, the legend of the Blackthorn becomes ambiguous and does not affect readers’ emotions in a meaningful way, other than during Dalinar’s heroic feats, and even then the effect is caused by the heroism.

The role of the analepses is to show readers what the Blackthorn is like. The analepses create a strong recency effect, which corresponds to Sternberg’s second model of rhetorical control, in which “the recency effect is designed to complicate, modify or qualify rather than demolish the reader’s first impressions” (Sternberg 99). The recency effect is created because the Blackthorn is *very* different than the Dalinar we as readers have gotten to know is. In most of the analepses, he is affected by what the Alethi call the “Thrill” of battle (*WoK* 187), which is revealed to be one of the Unmade, the princes of Voidbringers, only in the epigraph of chapter “An Old Friend”, in the latter part of *Oathbringer*. The Thrill gives soldiers bloodlust and makes them enraged, and in the first analepsis we learn that the Blackthorn is an addict:

An emotion stirred inside Dalinar.

It was a fire that filled the pit within. It washed through him and awakened him, bringing clarity. The sounds of his elites fighting the brightlord’s honor guard faded, metal on metal becoming clinks, grunts becoming merely a distant humming.

Dalinar smiled. Then the smile became a toothy grin. His vision returned as the brightlord—knife in hand—looked up and started, stumbling back. He seemed horrified.

Dalinar roared, spitting blood and throwing himself at the enemy. The swing that came at him seemed pitiful and Dalinar ducked it, ramming his shoulder against his foe’s lower body. Something thrummed inside Dalinar, the pulse of the battle, the rhythm of killing and dying.

The Thrill. (*OB* 46)

—

Dalinar kept moving, fighting off the dull sense of ... nothingness that often followed a battle. This was the worst time. He could still remember being alive, but now had to face a return to mundanity. (*OB* 51)

For the Blackthorn, having the Thrill is being alive, whereas Dalinar controls his emotions during battle and even gets nauseated a few times when fighting in the first novel because of the killing. The Blackthorn is also as far as he can be from the contemplating philosopher Dalinar is in the novels:

“Why...” the man said from within his helm. “Why us?”

“Don’t know,” Dalinar said, tossing the poleaxe back to Dym.

“You ... you *don’t know*?” the dying man said.

“My brother chooses,” Dalinar said. “I just go where he points me.” (*OB* 47)

Dalinar is the one who constantly questions and ponders their actions, he even thinks about a peace between the Alethi and the Parshendi instead of the vengeance the Alethi are after. The Blackthorn does not care, he does not even know why he is killing his enemies, as he seems to be only after the Thrill.

During the analepses, Dalinar, as the Blackthorn, does many things he is not proud of later, and some things he regrets deeply. He almost kills his brother in one of the analepses, because he is so consumed by the Thrill:

One way for Dalinar to get everything he deserved.

He was running. Some of the men in Gavilar's group raised hands in welcome. Weak. No weapons presented against him! He could slaughter them all before they knew what had happened. They *deserved* it! Dalinar deserved to—

Gavilar turned toward him, pulling free his helm and smiling an open, honest grin.

Dalinar pulled up, stopping with a lurch. He stared at Gavilar, his *brother*.

*Oh, Stormfather*, Dalinar thought. *What am I doing?*

He let the Blade slip from his fingers and vanish. Gavilar strode up, unable to read Dalinar's horrified expression behind his helm. As a blessing, no shamespren appeared, though he should have earned a legion of them in that moment. (OB 271)

What Dalinar does in the analepses, such as almost kills his brother in a frenzy, are not what we as readers expected from his past. His past issues with alcohol are known, although not the full extent of them, as he is passed out when the Assassin in White kills Gavilar in the prologue of the first novel. It is also known that he and his brother united Alethkar into one kingdom using the sword more than words. However, the ferocity of his actions takes the readers by surprise. It is something that the readers might expect from Sadeas's past, and the fact that Sadeas, probably the most unsympathetic character in the series, is not nearly as frenzied as the Blackthorn in the analepses makes the actions even worse. The actions make the Dalinar of the past very unsympathetic, and I doubt that any readers empathize with the Blackthorn for the most part. The worst of his actions is, however, when he burns an entire city, Rathalas, also known as the Rift, and accidentally kills his wife in the process.

Dalinar reacts to all the analepses that his wife features in, which is all but the first two until her death, just like the readers do, because he has gotten rid of all memories of her with old magic. His reaction to the earlier analepses is not especially strong, although he wonders why he is getting his memories back:

That was all that had emerged over the last few days. The rest was still a blur. He could recall meeting Evi, courting her—awkwardly, since both knew it was an arrangement of political necessity—and eventually entering into a causal betrothal.



He didn't remember love, but he did remember attraction.

The memories brought questions, like cremlings emerging from their hollows after the rain. (OB 240)

As the horrors of the analepses grow, Dalinar begins to wonder more and more about the reason for his memories coming back. This makes readers sympathize with him, because he is not happy about how he treated his wife, and the memories make him sad. Even if the Blackthorn does not deserve the readers' sympathy, present Dalinar fulfills Sklar's criteria for sympathy. He is clearly suffering, the suffering feels unfair, even if it is caused by his own actions, and the readers feel bad for Dalinar (Sklar 35). Had Dalinar known about what he has done, the readers probably would not feel sympathy for him, but because he remembers his past at the same time the readers learn about it, and the readers can see how much he has changed from the man he used to be, he deserves the readers' sympathy.

The strongest reaction comes after the analepsis where he kills her wife. Because of this, what happens in the Rift creates a stronger emotional reaction for the readers. The first time Dalinar and Gavilar conquer the Rift, twenty-two years earlier, Dalinar wins his Shardblade, Oathbringer, by killing the Rift's highprince. He spares the highprince's crying son, Tanalan, who comes back to haunt him in the later analepsis. Twenty-two years later, Tanalan makes Dalinar believe that Sadeas has betrayed him, and when Dalinar investigates, he gets caught in a trap, which almost kills him. He returns to the Rift seeing red, in fact, his eyes are literally red because of the Thrill: "I intend to so thoroughly ruin this place that for ten generations, nobody will *dare* build here for fear of the spirits who will haunt it. We will make a pyre of this city, and there shall be no weeping for its passing, for *none will remain to weep*" (OB 742). In addition to the city, he sets fire to the hidden hole where Tanalan was hiding as a child twenty-two years earlier without knowing that it is used as a prison and his wife is inside. He does not take responsibility for her death, but he feels it nevertheless:

As he departed, he strangely heard the screams of those people in the Rift. He stopped, wondering what it was. Nobody else seemed to notice.

Yes, that was distant screaming. In his head, maybe? They all seemed children to his ears. The ones he'd abandoned to the flames. A chorus of the innocent pleading for help, for mercy.

Evi's voice joined them. (OB 751)

The effect of the reveal to the readers is strengthened by the fact that Dalinar remembers his wife's fate ten chapters before the readers learn of it, and it takes ten chapters before the narrative returns to Dalinar after her wife's death and we as readers finally get to see his

reaction to the memory. The short paragraphs used for Kaladin's heroic moments are used in the scene where he remembers, and the effect of the memory to Dalinar is clearly stupefying:

Navani waited outside the building. Dalinar stepped out and blinked at the sunlight, chilled by the mountain cold. He smiled broadly at her, opening his mouth to tell her what her essay had done.

*An animal ... An animal reacts when it is prodded ...*

Memories.

*You whip it, and it becomes savage.*

Dalinar stumbled.

He vaguely heard Navani crying out, yelling for help. His vision spun, and he fell to his knees, feeling an overwhelming nausea. He clawed at the stone, groaning, breaking fingernails. Navani ... Navani was calling for a healer. She thought he'd been poisoned.

It wasn't that. No, it was far, far worse.

Storms. He *remembered*. It came crashing down on him, the weight of a thousand boulders.

He remembered what had happened to Evi. It had started in a cold fortress, in highlands once claimed by Jah Keved.

It had ended at the Rift. (OB 656–657)

The effect is also increased by Sanderson building the suspense toward the reveal by telling the events leading up to the burning of the Rift in three analepses before the chapter where the readers finally learn about Evi's fate.

When the readers finally see Dalinar's reaction to the memory, it is hard not to sympathize with him, because he is clearly broken by the memory:

They thought he was sick. They thought his collapse on the Oathgate platform had been caused by heart troubles, or fatigue. The surgeons had suggested rest. But if he stopped standing up straight, if he let it bow him down, he worried the memories would crush him.

The memories of what he'd done at the Rift.

The crying voices of children, begging for mercy.

He forced his emotions down. "What news," he said, embarrassed by how his voice trembled. (OB 823)

But what the readers can see as well is that Dalinar is not the man he was before. He admits to himself that it was cowardice to seek the old magic and get rid of the memories that made him drink even more than before. However, the memories lead him to drink again, because for him it was "either this or start killing again" (OB 942), and the killing is not an option anymore. The readers' view of the effect of the memories on his capacity to function is enhanced by Navani, his current wife, getting her first focalizing chapters. In these chapters, Navani takes on Dalinar's role as the leader of the coalition of kingdoms, because Dalinar is incapacitated by the memories and the alcohol abuse. All these elements combined enable us

as readers see that Dalinar is broken by the memories coming back, which creates a lot of sympathy for him.

While the analepses have a recency effect on Dalinar's character, the primacy effect created and fortified in the first two novels is strong enough to sustain the new information, and the analepses do not make the readers turn on Dalinar. In fact, the analepses can have the opposite effect and make the readers sympathize more with Dalinar, because he suffers greatly due to the memories coming back to him. One could argue that Sanderson manages to do with Dalinar what Homer did with Odysseus according to Sternberg. Sternberg argues that Homer used delayed exposition "on the one hand to ensure and maintain our essentially sympathetic attitude towards the protagonist, and on the other hand to explore his character in all its complexity" (92). By delaying in giving the information about Dalinar's past to the readers until the third book, Sanderson manages to maintain the readers' sympathy for Dalinar even after the reveals of his horrible past deeds.

### **4.3 The Moments of Peace**

The most important moments for Dalinar differ from Kaladin's moments, because during these moments instead of just accomplishing something, like swearing an Ideal, he finds peace. This happens for the first time at the end of *The Way of Kings* after he is betrayed by Sadeas and is certain of his death. The second time, after fighting the Assassin in White and losing, he finds peace in knowing that he could not have saved his brother from the assassin. The third time he finds peace is at the end of *Oathbringer*, after having heard his wife forgives him.

He does, however, have his heroic moments as well, such as rescuing Elhokar in his first focalizing chapters and fighting the Assassin in White in the second novel. These moments are not built similarly as Kaladin's moments, as they do not have multiple single line paragraphs to add to the suspense like Kaladin's moments do. Rather, the immersing "visual" element of the moments is created by focalization through his son's admiring perspective. The last moment, however, happens at the same time Kaladin fails to say the Fourth Ideal, and the effect created by the simultaneous events taking place is even stronger than in Kaladin's heroic moments. The information given to the readers through the analepses also "culminates" in the battle of Thaylenah, because Dalinar is forgiven by his dead wife and he literally defeats the subject of his addiction by imprisoning the Thrill. The triumph of Dalinar's moment is also enhanced by Kaladin's failure. It is also enhanced by the fact that it

brings together his status above the other characters, who are all amazed by what he is able to do.

The effect the moments of peace have on readers' empathy, and especially sympathy, is also different from Kaladin's moments. The first two moments of peace happen when Dalinar is certain he is about to die. The acceptance he has for the situation leads to the moment of peace, which to a certain extent, removes the need for sympathy for the character, since there is no "suffering to be alleviated," which is included in Sklar's first element in sympathy. Readers can feel elated or satisfied sympathy, or empathy, for the peace Dalinar gains, but the "regular" sympathy disappears. When his wife forgives him, on the other hand, readers still feel sympathy for his pain, but can also feel sympathy for the fact that, once again, he gains peace.

The first of Dalinar's heroic moments comes in his second focalizing chapter with Adolin, when he saves Elhokar from certain death. It is built similarly as the scene of Kaladin's Second Ideal, where the effect of the Second Ideal is seen through Teft's eyes instead of Kaladin's. Dalinar's heroic moment is seen through his son's eyes:

Adolin knew—suddenly—that disaster was upon them. The king would be killed on a simple hunt. The kingdom would shatter, the highprinces divided, the one tenuous link that kept them together cut away.

*No!* Adolin thought, stunned, still dazed, trying to stumble forward.

And then he saw his father.

Dalinar charged toward the king, moving with a speed and grace no man—not even one wearing Shardplate—should be able to manage. He leaped over a rock shelf, then ducked and skidded beneath a claw swinging for him. Other men thought they understood Shardblades and Shardplate, but Dalinar Kholin . . . at times, he proved them all children. (*WoK* 209)

Adolin's admiration for his father's skill not only creates a heroic image of Dalinar, it forms the image of Dalinar being above the others even in the beginning of the series. By showing Dalinar's superior skill to the readers, Sanderson emphasizes Dalinar's desire to most of the time use violence as a last resort, itself a heroic quality that readers can empathize with, instead of avoiding violence because "the Blackthorn has lost its sting" (*WoK* 353), as seems to be the general consensus among the highprinces. Dalinar's second heroic moment, apart from him rescuing Sadeas in a battle, comes at the end of the second novel. Like when seeing his father run to Elhokar's rescue, Adolin again freezes when seeing his father:

Metal clanged nearby as Dalinar fought. If he could hold a little longer, Adolin would be able to help. He would *not* let that creature get the better of him again. Not again!

He spared a glance for what Dalinar was doing, and froze, hands on the straps for his breastplate.

His father . . . his father moved beautifully. (*WoR* 1021)

Adolin freezing in these moments adds to the immersion of the moment. The effect is not as strong at the beginning of *The Way of Kings*, because the characters are still new to the readers. However, at the end of the second novel we as readers know that Adolin, despite his relatively young age, is battle-hardened and possibly the best duelist in Alethkar. He has just fought the Assassin in White himself with the added speed and strength of a Shardplate, and lost, and now his father is fighting, injured and without a Shardplate, and fares better than he did. Adolin's reaction adds to the image of Dalinar's superiority, but while Adolin's admiration once again makes Dalinar seem heroic, the stronger effect for the readers comes when he finally makes a mistake in the fight, and finds peace.

The moments of peace for Dalinar are also moments of forgiveness. In the first one, Adolin forgives his father for trusting Sadeas, who has just betrayed them, and Dalinar realizes that while his actions have led to their death, he was right in taking them:

Yes, he could have been more cautious. He could have been warier of Sadeas. But would he have given up on the Codes? Would he have become the same pitiless killer he'd been as a youth?

No.

Did it matter that the visions had been wrong about Sadeas? Was he ashamed of the man that they, and the readings from the book, had made him become? The final piece fell into place inside of him, the final cornerstone, and he found that he was no longer worried. The confusion was gone. He knew what to do, at long last. No more questions. No more uncertainty.

—

There he found peace. An unexpected emotion on the field of battle, but all the more welcome for that. (WoK 907–908)

The fight against the Assassin in White also gives him peace, because Dalinar can finally forgive himself:

In that instant he knew a truth he should always have known.

*If I'd been there, on that night, awake instead of drunk and asleep . . . Gavilar would still have died.*

*I couldn't have beaten this creature. I can't do it now, and I couldn't have done it then.*

*I couldn't have saved him.*

It brought peace, and Dalinar finally set down that boulder, the one he'd been carrying for over six years. (WoR 1022–1023)

These moments of peace create distance between the readers and Dalinar. Hans Robert Jauss lists five types of identification with the hero in his book *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, and the moments of peace combined with his heroics make Dalinar closest to what is the “the perfect hero” (Jauss 159), because the readers feel admiration for his unrivaled skill, which is enhanced by Adolin's admiration, and for him being able to accept

his fate and find peace. This makes it harder for readers to empathize or sympathize with him, because his “perfection” created by the moments lifts him above what the readers can relate to, and it seems like he no longer needs the readers’ sympathy because of the peace he finds. However, unlike the other two peaceful moments, the third one, in *Oathbringer*, does not directly create a similar distance between Dalinar and the readers, because the readers are aware of the pain caused by his memories throughout the scene. The third moment of peace for Dalinar takes place in the battle of Thaylenah, during which he is forgiven by his wife. The moment is also his biggest heroic moment, because he is able to resist Odium, the god of the Voidbringers, and he saves the other main characters of the series in the battle.

There are many elements of the battle of Thaylenah that evoke readers’ emotions. The build up for Kaladin’s Fourth Ideal, which is discussed in 2.1, is also the build-up for Dalinar’s heroic moment. During the scene, Dalinar is lifted even more above the other characters that he already has been. It begins with his wife, Navani, seeing him walking toward an “overwhelming force of Voidbringers — carrying a *book* tucked under his arm” (*OB* 1107). Dalinar completely ignores the army and finds Odium instead, and challenges him to a contest of champions. Unexpectedly, Odium chooses Dalinar as his champion, which comes as a surprise to Dalinar, as well as the readers:

“I have chosen my champion already. I’ve been preparing him for a long, long time.”

“Amaram.”

“Him? A passionate man, yes, but hardly suited to this task. No, I need someone who dominates a battlefield like the sun dominates the sky.”

The Thrill suddenly returned to Dalinar. The red mist—which had been fading—roared back to life. Images filled his mind. Memories of his youth spent fighting.

“I need someone stronger than Amaram,” Odium whispered.

“No.”

“A man who will win no matter the cost.”

The Thrill overwhelmed Dalinar, choking him.

“A man who has served me all his life. A man I trust. I believe I warned you that I knew you’d make the right decision. And now here we are.”

“No.”

“Take a deep breath, my friend,” Odium whispered. “I’m afraid that this will hurt.” (*OB* 1121–1122)

The suspense of the moment is built by the simultaneous events, ten different focalizers, and the readers’ expectation for Kaladin’s Fourth Ideal. Odium torments Dalinar with the memories, especially of the events in the Rift, and right before Kaladin is supposed to say the Fourth Ideal, Odium says: “It’s done, Dalinar. The pain has passed. Stand up and claim the

station you were born to obtain” (OB 1130). The readers have no reason to doubt Odium’s words that Dalinar is now his, since Dalinar’s other son, Renarin, who can see the future, has just moments before seen his father fall, and because Kaladin is about to swear the Fourth Ideal and, once again, save everyone. However, surprisingly, neither of those things end up happening. Instead, Dalinar rises up and finally takes responsibility for his actions. While Kaladin’s Second and Third Ideals are major moments for the character, neither of them have the magnitude of this scene:

Trembling, bleeding, agonized, Dalinar forced air into his lungs and spoke a single ragged sentence.  
 “You cannot have my pain.” (OB 1133)

—  
 Odium stepped back. “Dalinar? What is this?”

“You cannot have my pain.”

“Dalinar—”

Dalinar forced himself to his feet. “You. Cannot. Have. My. Pain.”

“Be sensible.”

“I killed those children,” Dalinar said.

“No, it—”

“I burned the people of Rathalas.”

“I was there, influencing you—”

“*YOU CANNOT HAVE MY PAIN!*” Dalinar bellowed, stepping toward Odium. The god frowned. His Fused companions shied back, and Amaram raised a hand before his eyes and squinted.

Were those gloryspren spinning around Dalinar?

“I *did* kill the people of Rathalas,” Dalinar shouted. “You might have been there, but *I* made the choice. I decided!” He stilled. “I killed her. It hurts so much, but I did it. I accept that. You cannot have her. You *cannot* take her from me again.”

“Dalinar,” Odium said. “What do you hope to gain, keeping this burden?”

Dalinar sneered at the god. “If I pretend . . . If I pretend I *didn’t* do those things, it means that I can’t have grown to become someone else.”

“A failure.”

Something stirred inside of Dalinar. A warmth that he had known once before. A warm, calming light.

*Unite them.*

“Journey before destination,” Dalinar said. “It cannot be a journey if it *doesn’t* have a *beginning*.”

A thunderclap sounded in his mind. Suddenly, awareness poured back into him. The Stormfather, distant, feeling frightened—but also surprised.

*Dalinar?*

“I will take responsibility for what I have done,” Dalinar whispered. “If I must fall, I will rise each time a better man.” (OB 1134–1135)

The last line is the Third Ideal of Dalinar’s Order of the Knights Radiant. The build up to the scene, where readers expect the Fourth Ideal from Kaladin, and Kaladin’s subsequent failure make readers feel a great amount of elated sympathy for Dalinar’s success. The moment is so

strong that it even diminishes the need for readers' sympathy for Kaladin caused by his failure. The readers' sympathy for Dalinar increases throughout the novel because of the memories' effect on him, and his ability to overcome the grief of the memories make readers happy for his success.

The moment of greatness, however, is bigger than just the Third Ideal. The next thing Dalinar does is combine the three realms, the Physical, the Cognitive and the Spiritual into one, and as he does that, he is forgiven by Evi:

Only one person remained in place. A young parshwoman, the one that Dalinar had visited in the visions.

"What are you?" she whispered as he stood with arms outstretched, holding to the lands of mind and spirit.

He closed his eyes, breathing out, listening to a sudden stillness. And within it a simple, quiet voice. A woman's voice, so familiar to him.

*I forgive you.*

Dalinar opened his eyes, and knew what the parshwoman saw in him. Swirling clouds, glowing light, thunder and lightning.

"I am Unity."

He slammed both hands together.

And combined three realms into one. (*OB* 1136)

Once again, Dalinar does something that elevates him above the other characters, and while it is certainly heroic and brings elated sympathy for him, it also distances him from the readers' relatability and makes him harder to empathize with, because only Honor is supposed to be able to do what he does. The same elevating effect is created by him fighting a different battle than the rest of the characters. While the others fight the Voidbringer army, he first takes on Odium, after which he alone faces the Thrill and captures it. Even the pain of the memories that readers sympathize with starts to fade: "Forgiven. The pain he'd so recently insisted that he would keep started to fade away on its own" (*OB* 1139). Additionally, when imprisoning the Thrill, instead of fighting it he embraces it overcoming his addiction and actually *thanks* it for giving him the strength to refuse Odium. The battle of Thaylenah begins with a very sympathetic Dalinar, who is about to be defeated because of his debilitating grief, and ends with him not only elevating far above the other characters, but elevating above the readers' sympathy and empathy for him, leaving only admiration for his actions.

Dalinar's moments in the series differ from Kaladin's moments, because at times Dalinar becomes the "perfect hero" and becomes solely the subject of readers' admiration, whereas Kaladin at no point is able to cross the threshold from the "imperfect hero" to the "perfect hero" (Jauss 159), and therefore always retains the readers' sympathy during his heroic



moments. Some of Dalinar's moments bring the readers' elated sympathy for him, and some moments take away the readers' sympathy because of his inner peace.

#### **4.4 Concluding Remarks**

The readers' first impression of Dalinar is created differently than Shallan's and Kaladin's. By having two focalizers in Dalinar's first focalizing chapters, Sanderson creates a contrast between the Dalinar the readers see and the Dalinar the other characters see. This separation continues throughout the series becoming stronger and leads to Dalinar being in a way on a level above the other characters. The moments of heroism and peace that Dalinar has in the series, as he is elevated even above the heroic Kaladin. In these moments, Dalinar also finds peace through forgiveness, which lessens the readers' empathy and sympathy for him as he elevates himself even above the readers. Dalinar's character is even able to withhold the effect of the analepses of the third novel, in which he performs horrendous deeds that would normally make him lose the readers' sympathy and empathy for him.

## 5. Conclusion

In this thesis, I have analyzed the major elements that have an effect on readers' empathy and sympathy toward the three main characters of Brandon Sanderson's *The Stormlight Archive*. The elements used for each character differ from each other, but there are also shared elements, such as the analepses in each novel. In the second chapter, I analyzed the elements used for evoking readers' emotions toward Kaladin. Kaladin's heroic moments in the series are the strongest element in terms of evoking readers' emotions toward him. The montage-like imagery of the scenes and the textual structure used during the scenes, as well as the buildup to the scenes and the events that take place, create a powerful sympathetic and empathetic reaction toward Kaladin. Readers' emotions toward Kaladin are also influenced by his relationship with Syl, who the readers feel sympathy and empathy for, which influences readers' emotions toward Kaladin. The analepses of the first novel are the third major element that has an affect on readers' emotions toward Kaladin. Through the analepses readers learn the reason for one of his unsympathetic characteristics, his hatred against lighteyes. The analepses also explain some of his major decisions in the story that lead up to his heroic moments.

In the third chapter, I analyzed readers' emotions toward Shallan. Unlike the other two characters, Shallan does not have similar specific moments in the story that influence readers' emotions toward her. Readers' empathy and sympathy for Shallan is built through her character's growth during the series. The first impression of her created by the first novel is altered by her emotional growth as well as the analepses of the second novel that explain her naive and timid characteristics in the first novel. The analepses have a recency effect on Shallan's character, and the events revealed in the analepses are the cause for the third element that affects readers' emotions toward her, her inner turmoil. The inner turmoil is evident even in the first novel, but the focus of the turmoil shifts to her identity in the second novel and escalates into near schizophrenia in the third novel, which affects readers' emotions toward her.

In the fourth chapter, I analyzed readers' emotions toward Dalinar. The first impression of Dalinar is created differently than with Shallan and Kaladin. Dalinar shares his first focalizing chapters, which creates a contrast between him and the other characters in the series. The contrast grows and eventually leads to Dalinar being on a level above the other characters making him less relatable, which influences readers' empathy and sympathy toward him. Readers' emotions are also affected by the analepses of the third novel, which have a recency

effect on his character because of their surprising content. Like Kaladin, Dalinar has specific moments in the series that have a major effect on readers' empathy and sympathy toward him. These moments differ from Kaladin's moments, because they add to the elevated image of Dalinar and therefore have a different effect than Kaladin's moments.

It is difficult to say how the upcoming novels in the series are going to influence readers' emotions toward these characters. In *The Way of Kings*, Kaladin was clearly the main protagonist because of the number of focalizing chapters and him being the focalizer in the analepses, which emphasized readers' emotions toward him. However, in the second and third novels, there is no "main" protagonist, although it could be argued that because of the analepses, Shallan is the main protagonist in the second novel, and Dalinar in the third. However, in the fourth novel the focalization of the analepses shifts to less featured characters, and it is hard to predict how it will affect the three main characters. Kaladin will probably have his "moments" also in the future novels because of the two Ideals yet to be said, but what happens with Shallan and Dalinar is harder to predict. However, one thing is for sure, the three characters will elicit the readers' empathy and sympathy also in the future.

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