



# The Gathering Storm

*Kate Elliott*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# The Gathering Storm

*Kate Elliott*

**The Gathering Storm** Kate Elliott

Fifth in the Nebula Award-nominated series.

The time of cataclysm is almost here when the land of the Aoi-cast forth from the world long centuries ago by an unimaginably powerful spell-weaving-will at last return to its starting point with disastrous consequences...

## The Gathering Storm Details

Date : Published February 3rd 2004 by Daw Books (first published April 1st 2000)

ISBN : 9780756401320

Author : Kate Elliott

Format : Paperback 977 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Epic Fantasy, Science Fiction Fantasy

 [Download The Gathering Storm ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Gathering Storm ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Gathering Storm Kate Elliott**

---

## From Reader Review The Gathering Storm for online ebook

### Jasmine says

WHERE IS MY HBO MINISERIES. WHERE IS IT.

---

### Ryan Mueller says

This book is very typical of the series. While there are a lot of slow sections that I struggle through, the end of each book always rewards me for my patience. Kate Elliott is capable of writing some truly amazing scenes. Her characterization is also some of the best in the fantasy genre. I think this series would be among my favorites if the pacing were faster.

---

### Clay Kallam says

(This review is of the Crown of Stars series, not the individual books, but is attached to each one so that potential readers know what they're getting into. It is imperative to begin with "King's Dragon," of course, and once involved, the difference in quality and focus of each of the seven volumes is far less important than the impact of the series as a whole.)

Crown of Stars is a sprawling, sometimes confusing, seven volumes of epic medieval fantasy that is worth the investment of time and energy to track its multitude of characters through complex plots and subplots as they battle their way through 4,000 pages of magic, catastrophe and of course, eventual redemption.

But first it has to be said that Kate Elliott doesn't bring every one of her characters all the way home, as more than a few are killed relatively early in the series, and some that seem destined for an early demise just keep hanging on. This kind of uncertainty, and some unexpected plot twists, keep the pages turning, and makes this long series an entertaining and worthwhile ride.

The setup is a thinly disguised medieval Europe (think 9th century) a few generations after the death of Charlemagne (called Taillefer in the book). The echoes of the Dariyan (read "Roman") Empire still linger, but the political side of the book is concerned with the dynastic maneuverings of Central European dukes and kings, which are complex to begin with and get even more so as the books roll on.

The fantasy aspect combines powerful magic wielded by a minority of humans, plus some non-human races (though the Eika are the Vikings) and cosmology that resembles the ancient Greek theories about the spheres of existence that surround Earth.

And then of course there are the human interactions, ranging from obsession (both love and hate), religious fervor, lust for power, and revenge, all played out through a cast of what seems like thousands. (Keeping track isn't all that easy, and when Elliott wraps everything up, it's not a simple task to sort everything, and everyone, out on just one reading.)

Though there are many point-of-view characters, probably the two most important are Liath, a young woman who has spent her life running away from something her father greatly fears, and Alain, a young farm boy who draws the attention of powerful humans and spirits.

But almost equally important are Sanglant, a bastard son of King Henry whose mother is a mysterious Aoi (perhaps human, perhaps just slightly different); Rosvita, a nun and advisor to King Henry; Ivar, a young nobleman; and Stronghand, a young Eika warrior.

There are plenty of villains, fully fleshed out minor characters, a magical catastrophe, and most important in works as long and complex as this one, a satisfying ending.

The Crown of Stars, all in all, is an excellent medieval fantasy, though not quite up to Miles Cameron's Traitor Son Cycle (which was written after this) and perhaps a little too complicated for its own good. And naturally, some of the seven volumes are better than others, but if "King's Dragon" grabs your interest, then go ahead and buy the other six – you'll have thousands of pages of enjoyment ahead, and the luxury of knowing that you have months of good reading on the way.

---

## **Jenny says**

i got 686 pages into the book and the bad guys cut out zacharia's tongue .. i put the book down and that's it.

---

## **Emma Deplores Goodreads Censorship says**

A disclaimer: for someone who's read a lot of fantasy, I am not a big series reader. In fact, after beginning Crown of Stars I realized that, should I make it through all seven volumes, it would become the only completed adult epic fantasy series longer than a trilogy that I'd ever read in its entirety. Every word there counts: I've read entire epic fantasy series for younger readers, mostly when I was one. I've read series that wouldn't quite count as "epic fantasy," because they ended, then added previously-unplanned sequels after proving to be popular. I've read every volume of one lengthy and ongoing fantasy series, and an embarrassing number of a series that went bad long before I stopped reading. And I've read a whole lot of trilogies. But seven-volume series are not my thing. I expect every book I read to have something new, different, and exciting to offer; simply continuing to offer up the same characters and world, no matter how much I initially enjoyed them, doesn't cut it.

All that said, in my view this book worsens the slump that began in book four. First, because Liath and Alain have yet to be fully re-integrated into the story after their otherworldly journeys in the previous volume. Liath spends most of the book in a time-travel warp, while Alain loses most of his memory and spends the book ping-ponging from one captivity to another. (Alain is not the only character to spend much of the book detained by somebody or other, but he definitely logs the greatest number of abductions, for those keeping score at home.) With the possible exception of Sanglant, the rest of the cast have never been interesting enough to carry the story on their own. The POVs of Stronghand, Zacharias, Anna and Ivar could all still be removed without significant harm to the story; Rosvita and Hanna are more relevant but not complex enough to merit starring roles. Without strong plotlines for Liath and Alain – and set in a world by this point well-established – this installment isn't nearly as exciting as the first three. But it is the longest yet.

Second, the plot doesn't quite work. One admirable aspect of this series is its progression of antagonists. Rather than one seven-volume standoff, the series so far has featured several major conflicts that each lasted for a book or two, with the seeds for later plots planted early on. Its only constant villains never openly declare themselves, but rather take advantage of any situation. All that keeps things fresh. The downside here is that the impending-cataclysm and ensorcelled-king plotlines aren't as interesting as the plots in previous

books. It's never clear exactly what our heroes should be doing about all this, which prevents much real momentum from building. And their ultimate actions seem more a result of luck and others' off-screen decisions than their own efforts, rendering the preceding several hundred pages of questing and minor POVs superfluous.

Also, the book loses points for some truly moronic character decisions . . . letting valuable and dangerous prisoners loose; letting valuable and dangerous prisoners loose *and allowing them to carry off one's own young child as a hostage* . . . clearly the plot required more villainy from said prisoners, but surely it doesn't also require our heroes to be too stupid to live?

Anyway, I'll call this 2.5 stars because while it is padded, it's also reasonably enjoyable. While the plot doesn't coalesce in a very satisfying way, it does keep moving, rather than bogging down in endless travels or squabbles like some fantasy sequels. And it ends in an interesting place, blowing much of the story wide open in a way that provides a lot of possibilities for the final two books. I do plan to read on, but not immediately.

EDIT: Crown of Stars ratings:

King's Dragon: 4  
Prince of Dogs: 3.5  
The Burning Stone: 4  
Child of Flame: 3  
The Gathering Storm: 2.5  
In the Ruins: 3  
Crown of Stars: 3

---

## Alice says

EPIC.

This book is epic. And normally, I like epic. But for some reason, this series makes me feel stupid. There are so many characters doing so many things in so many places, and what with the wacky time shifting and whatnot in this book, I just can't keep up. I spent most of my time going... "wait, WHERE are we? What is happening? Where did Liath go?"

I feel badly about it, because this author does things I normally like... taking archetypes and twisting them around, avoiding the happy endings for the individual characters and for the plotlines, having characters grow and change and their relationships grow and change... but it's TOO MUCH. I almost wish this were simpler and we could spend more time with just the people I actually care about, who seem to just be Liath and Alain. All the time we spend with SAnglant, Ivar, Hannah, Anna, Rosvita... what is it for?

Also, the foreshadowing and the symbolism... it's so heavy handed that it needs to go somewhere clear, or the reader gets annoyed. At least if the reader is me. Because I am just not sure why I care about the seven sleepers, or the seven stars, or the Lavas hounds, or the heresy of the torture of Daisan, or roses, or ... any of it! WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

My husband has been trying to get me to stop reading this series, probably because of all the whining, and normally I would stop. But I really want to know how it all comes together. I can't for the life of me figure

out how it could resolve, and that draws me along, even if the reading experience isn't actually enjoyable. Blerg.

---

### **Allison says**

*The Gathering Storm* seriously cut into my reading stats for the year! At almost 1000 pages, it took me a month to read (I did take a break around the middle). This series has definitely reached sprawling epic category. But if you like this kind of thing and have the patience for it, it's really brilliant. Not enough people know about this series.

There are a lot of characters and timelines to keep track of in this book. I'll admit to being a bit fuzzy on some of them, and on their locations at times. Travel through the crowns means that months and sometimes years pass in days for some characters, and it can be hard to keep track of who is when and where. That didn't really bother me, though, since it is all about moving players into position for the anticipated cataclysm, exploring varying goals for the event.

I am still enjoying many of the points of view, but there are a few that I find myself wishing would hurry along. Zacharias, the self-proclaimed coward of an apostate monk. Ivar and his band of heretics. Strong Hand, who is just so inhuman that I have a hard time relating to him or caring about his Eika empire consolidation. But I'm sure that'll be important at some point.

I do know some readers don't have the patience for such a character-driven story, but I still find myself savoring it. The world feels so real, and the characters are finely nuanced. The character development is a real strength of this entire series. You never know how fortunes are going to change in the blink of an eye, and how a character will react to their new circumstances. It's just so well done - great writing and insights into human and non-human natures.

One character in particular who I thought was fairly static was transformed throughout this book and their growth ended up being pivotal. And Alain - poor Alain just goes from misery to misery on top of being back in his native time and losing that other life (which I'm thankful gave him a reprieve for at least one book). I hope things start looking up for him now because he's suffered more than enough.

But most importantly, the moment all of this maneuvering is aiming at does finally arrive! The cataclysm occurs, and although I won't tell you whose plot succeeded, I can tell you that destruction on a massive scale was inevitable either way. I can't wait to see what happens *In the Ruins* because nothing will be the same. Except for human nature with all its resilience, its hope, and its less admirable qualities.

---

### **Kristi-anne says**

I read these a while ago and was one of best sets I read so far, so anticipating all the way through all 7 books omg such good set I wished they never end, one of those where you finish and think "NOW WHAT?! :( " AWESOME!

---

### **Kat Hooper says**

ORIGINALLY POSTED AT Fantasy Literature.

The Crown of Stars series is well-thought out and obviously well-planned. It's epic in scope and it's got a lot of texture. There are many complex characters who we follow in parallel, as in Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time. Some of them are very likable, and there are some really excellent villains (e.g., Hugh). Ms. Elliott's creatures are imaginative and enjoyable, and I especially liked the way they interact with the humans. Ms. Elliott uses a lot of description and therefore her plot moves very slowly (again, similar to WOT).

The writing was inconsistent throughout the series. Sometimes it seems brilliant, but at other times I'd think "why did she tell me that?" or "this could be moving a little faster." It's often wordy. Her editor could have almost arbitrarily taken out a third of the sentences with no ill effect. Sometimes she over-explains what a character is feeling or his/her motivation when it would have been better to let the dialog or action speak for the character. Sometimes she tells me something too many times (e.g., "but his voice always sounds like that"). I wonder if the inconsistency is due to different editing processes, because it's not like that in all the books, and even some individual books are internally inconsistent. I thought the fourth book, especially, was not well edited.

The pace of these novels is so slow that I found my self bogged down in the middle of book 5 with not much desire to go on, so I decided to quit. I struggled with that decision because I really did want to find out what happened to the characters, but it was taking me too long to get there and the writing style wasn't good enough to make up for the crawling pace (unlike Wheel of Time).

Overall, these books entertained me for a while, especially the first couple of novels. The plot was interesting and the characterization was particularly notable, but it eventually got too slow. This is the book I quit in the middle of.

Read more Kate Elliott book reviews at *Fantasy Literature* .

---

## Mei-Lu says

Although the Gathering Storm is the fifth in a seven volume series (Crown of Stars), it's the last one I read. In fact, I didn't even finish this book. I got to page 672 and I gave up. Still, I feel like this book should count for two reasons: 1) plenty of books manage to tell their stories in 672 pages or less and 2) I need to get something out of the torture that was reading this series.

In the Gathering Storm, Liath and Sanglant finally reunite to prevent the upcoming Apocalypse together. But they've been separated for three years and a lot has happened in those three years. Because Sanglant is a whiny, self-involved, spoiled child with abandonment issues, he's spent the last three years angry at Liath for leaving him. (Even though he actually saw her being spirited away by angelic beings and she told him she was trying to get back to him.) Any sympathy I may have had for Sanglant got pissed away in book four but I stuck around for the reunion in book five in hopes that somehow these characters would grow up and experience some form of redemption (I've read plenty of books where I've hated the main characters until the last moments). Sadly, the way Liath and Sanglant handled their differences made me realize I could no longer waste my precious time and energy with this series. Actually, it made me resent spending so much time and energy on these characters (which you can probably tell from my maximally bitchy tone in all my Crown of Stars reviews).

Kate Elliott is a great writer but not every great writer writes books we love or even like. Lois McMaster Bujold's Chalion series is one of my all-time favorite fantasy series but I couldn't even get through book one

of the Sharing Knife series. Sorry, Kate. Respect to your talent but I didn't like this one.

---

### **Dave says**

I am really enjoying this series a lot. I like the way you actually care about the supporting characters as well as the main ones.

My only complaint, and it is a small one, is when you get really excited to see where the story is going with one character.....right as the author switches viewpoints.

This one has a pretty satisfying 'ending'. I can't wait to get started on the next one.

---

### **Kerri says**

One of the great things about this book, about this series in fact, is that it's nearly impossible to put it down. You may have prior commitments or friends to hang out with or whatever, but you still can't help but wonder when Liath and Sanglant will finally reunite, or where Hanna and Rosvita and friends will end up when they travel through the crowns, or if Alain will ever find happiness in the present. Almost no one finds true happiness in this fifth volume of the Crown of Stars series as the world hurtles toward a cataclysm that will literally change everything. New alliances are formed, discoveries are made, and bonds are tested as things begin to unravel. And overall, it's an excellent read. Definitely recommend it, but read the first four books in the series first or you may get a bit confused.

---

### **Leseparatist says**

Still very enjoyable, but a bit of a disappointment compared to the previous volumes. It felt like a lot of shuffling of pieces took entirely too much space, and at a certain point I couldn't help but roll my eyes at the obvious mumbo-jumbo for the sake of getting the timeline to fit all the disparate threads. This character gets sick for three months! This character travels in time for a year and a half! This character gets stuck in a cage and eats algae for a month! This character travels to Narnia! Some of these might be more accurate than others!

That said, I still love so many characters, and the world remains ever fascinating and vibrant. Sanglant, Rosvita and Liath are particular favourites, PoV-wise. I'd have liked Hanna more without the "Hanna hates Sanglant now" plotline :( It was understandable, but it didn't lead us anywhere.

Out of boredom, I made up a drinking game for the series, though.

- 1) drink if sb can't trust Wolfhere.
- 2) drink 3x if sb regrets trusting Wolfhere.
- 3) drink if sb suffers from stomach problems, especially brought on by too spicy / rich food (I pay attention because I have ulcers, but really, it's there so often)
- 4) drink if Sanglant's voice is hoarse but it's always hoarse because of his wound!
- 5) drink if Hugh knows how to use natural lighting to enhance his looks.
- 6) drink twice if he knows how to use artificial lighting.
- 7) and thrice if people ponder the irony of his evil vs. his beauty.
- 8) drink if Sanglant finds it difficult to stop perving over any attractive woman in the vicinity.

9) finish (another) bottle when Elliott makes a reference to the difficulty of maintaining the timeline. See e.g. a character who doesn't know how old they are anymore.

There was more, but I don't remember.

A solid 3,5 stars (the ending makes up for a lot!), and I'm very curious about the last two volumes. Bring it on, Elliott. Bring it on <3

---

## Mayim de Vries says

*"This war seems like a desert to me, a barren wasteland. But still, it must be crossed."*

**Either the series fatigue has finally got me or this novel was too long by at least 900 pages.**

Gathering Story is **a brick of a book that could be much shorter**. Again, whole passages or even POVs (sorry Stronghand, you lost your charm when you decided to mimic humans) could be cut out without doing any harm to the whole story.

**Roughly 7/8 of the novel is storm-mongering**. We are repeatedly told that the great cataclysm is coming inexorably, as the Aoi, banished centuries ago, are about to return. A huge catastrophe is looming, and in the meantime, people (and other sentient beings) are only concerned with petty issues.

By this point in the series, there are **many sub-plots of which some have their distinct narrations and POVs whereas others are just recounted or mentioned in the passing** (dreams carry the narrative very often and then visions through fire). I am still unsure whether Elliot had it all planned or whether she is playing by ear. But one thing is certain, **some of the marginal characters have grown into major protagonists, at times even more interesting than the leading pair**. I have mentioned Liath's waning charm (she is a pure ~~snow~~ fire-flake at the moment). Presently, I also suspect that Ms Elliott either hates Alain or is unsure what to do with him and is trying to kill him (in vain). Of the secondary protagonists, Hanna and Rosvita deserve your special attention. While I wasn't particularly fond of Hanna, she really blossomed somewhere around the third volume. To the contrary, Eika and their shenanigans are not only detached from the rest of the tale, but also lost their unique flavour. I'd be happier without Stronghand's POV (and it takes so many boring pages!).

The main problem is: while we hear that the storm is upon us for hundreds of pages in the book nothing happens! I understand that **the time span is long** (we are used to books happening within days, here it is years in a single volume), and that each of the characters needs their space, but **there were whole sections that reminded me more of a chronicle that recorded even the tiniest detail (down to defecation) than a story which captures the essentials**.

There are many moments that, despite everything, save the novel, but, it's really hard to get through some fragments. I will **continue in a hope that the next instalment will compensate** for this long meaningless interlude.

**I would not have made it without the wonderful reading cabal: princess Veronica, Jess of the Eagles, Sister Choko, and Shaitarn the Bookwurm who make reading the series worthwhile and enjoyable despite the rating.**

Also in the series:

1. King's Dragon ★★★★★
  2. Prince of Dogs ★★★★★?
  3. The Burning Stone ★★★★★?
  4. Child of Flame ★★★★★?
  6. In the Ruins
  7. Crown of Stars
- 

## Rindis says

As the Crown of Stars series nears its end, this book loses its individual identity. There's no real 'spine' overtly holding this book together as a unit. No new characters to speak of.

As a result, *The Gathering Storm* does feel 'looser' in the plot department.

On the other hand, the cataclysm that the series is centered around is drawing close. One of the more prominent subplots here are the Seven Sleepers' quest to take control of the Crown so they can cast the spell to keep the exiled bit of Earth from returning. Unfortunately, this is undermined by much of it being in the hands of tertiary characters and away from all the viewpoint characters, so it's hard to tell how well its going much of the time.

The fact that time is pressing is also undermined by the fact that it is always hard to grasp how much time is passing in this series. With multiple separate groups to switch between the series naturally hops back and forth a bit in time, so figuring out just when everything is in relation to each other is difficult, and is made even more so by the fact that traveling through standing stones takes a variable amount of time. I think being a bit more rigorous about keeping track of the progress of time in the book would have helped ratchet up the tension.

While the book in one sense feels like a 'holding pattern' while we chew up time to the cataclysm, there's plenty to hold attention too. Alain and several other characters spend a lot of the book battered by outside forces without any real time being proactive. On the other hand, Liath and Sanglant finally get (briefly) reunited, get a chance to work out some of their troubles, and they provide much of the forward momentum for the book.

It's not a place to start reading (hey, book 5!), but it seems to have set everyone up for the final act quite well. It's hard to judge on it's own merits because of this, and my opinion wavers between 'took too long for what it did', and 'kept me engaged the whole way'.

---