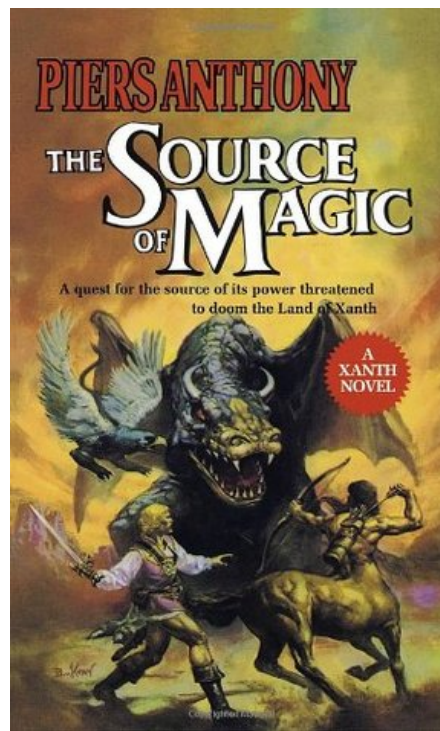




The Source of Magic

Piers Anthony

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The Source of Magic

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The Source of Magic Piers Anthony

Ordered by King Trent to determine the source of Xanth's magic, Bink and his companions were harried by an unseen enemy determined to thwart them. When even their protector turned against them, Bink still managed to reach his goal and carry out the King's orders...but the king did not expect Bink's next act--to destroy utterly the magic of Xanth!

The Source of Magic Details

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From Reader Review The Source of Magic for online ebook

Jessica M says

Anthony starts you off quickly, something I enjoyed, since most sequels tend to summarize what happened in the first book. I had to slog through these first half as we rejoin Bink, Crombie, and Chester on a new quest. I didn't like the first half. It felt episodic and the world building felt drug induced, in my opinion. However, Anthony pulled his craftsmanship together by the latter half, and the end was satisfying, albeit he ends it with a cliffhanger. If you enjoyed the first book, this will satisfy!

Kathryn says

I think I liked this book even more than the first one in the series. Piers Anthony gives us our first look at some of the REALLY strange places (and people) in Xanth. It's also a swashbuckling boys-only adventure, (at least until the last quarter of the book) with very little of the moping that went on in "A Spell for Chameleon". At least until near the end when the main character does something unbelievably reckless that you have to admire him for. And also? There's some cute puns, but not to the point where they take over the story.

Bryan says

3.5 stars. Just finishing re-reading this one, and found that it's not nearly as memorable as the first book in the series. I had forgotten nearly everything about this book.

It's not as well-written as the first book in the series either, but it's not as bad as some would have you believe. And the sexist attitudes are certainly prevalent everywhere, but perhaps they are intended to be part of the humor.

To me, this novel was Pier Anthony's attempt at worldbuilding. While not necessarily lacking in the first book, this book really spends time dealing with how Xanth differs from Mundania, and gives readers an idea of the variety of ways in which the setting could be used. Yes, it's completely foreign and whimsical, and yes the sexist attitude is childishly simple, but perhaps that's not coincidental.

Favorite line of the book "Dope! Come back and prove yourself worthy of the name!" "Worthy of the name dope?"

Jessica says

The Source of Magic is the second book in Piers Anthony's *Xanth* series. This series is usually well known for it's heavy use of puns and the resemblance of the land of Xanth to a certain North American peninsula with an oversized rodent infestation (i.e. Florida).

Bink, a Magician class Talent in a society where everyone has magic, is searching for the souch of magic in the land of Xanth. He is escorted by two of his friends through the dangers and perils of a magical, but not at all friendly wilderness.

This book was written before Piers Anthony really got thick into the puns, and I feel it's the better for it. Bink is a more thoughtful character than some of the leads in later books, and the situation is much more complex, focusing around personal honor and ethics. There's plenty of action to keep the reader interested, though. From Demons to Dragons, Piers Anthony covers the whole fantasy genre.

Elisa Kay says

My partner pulled this book off the shelf for me to read. I did not want to give him the satisfaction of knowing it was good, every time he asked how it was going - I'd reply "boring". So he'd ask how's that boring book going.

Well now I want the next book in the series and find out more about his son.

Kirsti says

The second of the Xanth novels, and the second book to focus on Bink. In this book he discovers the source of magic in Xanth, and learns more about the land he calls home. I love the adventure in the early novels, they aren't the standard boy meets girl formula (although boys do still meet girls, it just isn't the central quest) A fun read, I can't remember even say how many times I've read this one but I always enjoy it. On to the third!

Jeffrey says

The first three novels of Xanth are classic fantasy novels. In A Spell for Chameleon, we are introduced to a world where everyone has a magic Talent. Some can point unerringly at trouble, others can change their appearance. In order to become a citizen of Xanth, a person must display the talent or they are exiled to Mundania (where we live). In Spell, Bink is revealed to have a talent, but the talent itself is reluctant to be revealed – as Bink's talent, tries to thwart evidence of its existence in order to ensure that no one can harm Bink magically. If people knew what the talent was, its power might be lessened. Moreover, Bink's talent is Magician Class, capital letters intended. In Spell, some of the permutations of this talent are explored as Bink goes up against Trent, another Magician class talent, who eventually becomes the King of Xanth. There is a wonderful explanation of the power of Bink's talent in Spell that leads to the events captured in the next novel.

In The Source of Magic, King Trent sends Bink on a quest to find out why Xanth has magic. In the process Anthony explores the wonderful terrain of Xanth and further permutations of Bink's talent are revealed. His quest companion's know he has a talent but they are unaware of what it is. Good Magician Humphrey, whose Magic Talent is the accumulation of knowledge is on the quest and he brings a powerful demon along as well, to answer questions. The interplay between the questors, the inimicable flora and fauna, and the powerful Source of Magic makes this a great fun read, which I have read many times.

Might in fact be time to read it again.

Liz says

Hmmm... it's a strange thing to read your childhood favourites as an adult - except with Harry Potter, which for me is timeless. I will never stop enjoying them.

I quite enjoyed 'The Source of Magic', though reading it now, a few things strike me. Firstly an obvious one - the prose are not nearly as good as I remember. But that is to be expected - nobody writes like Ian McEwan when they're writing young adult fiction.

Also, this book in particular (I have yet to see whether the others will follow suit, though I expect they will) is overtly sexist. The premise basically centres around a bunch of men of various species (a man, a centaur, a man transformed into a griffin) going on a quest because their wives and partners are either pregnant or have just had a kid, and the men wish to escape the stress of their home life! Yeah, what a great message to send to young readers! The books goes on and the chauvinism gets worse. At the end, the protagonist doles out some male wisdom to the lady centaur, telling her that in order to keep her partner interested, she must pay him more attention instead of focusing too much on her new born baby centaur. Not good, Piers Anthony, not good at all.

One of the main characters is also a self-proclaimed 'woman-hater' who takes any opportunity throughout the narrative to discuss why he despises the opposite sex so much, only to end the book marrying a woman who he doesn't have to see all the time, because that constitutes a perfect relationship for him.

Also, it's got LOADS of sexual undertones that I totally failed to pick up the first time round - not saying that's a bad thing, just picking up on aspects of the book that I didn't get when I was younger.

Overall this book would have been a lovely nostalgic indulgence if it hadn't been for Piers Anthony sending a message to his readers that if your wife/girlfriend/lady centaur is annoying you with her ridiculous female ways or her unforgiving pregnancy hormones - go on a life-threatening quest, it will make you appreciate her a lot more when you get home.

I'm going to carry on reading the series (though I probably shouldn't) because I remember that I loved some of the books later on in the series, and I need the character set ups. Let's hope Anthony's story lines focus more on promoting equality in subsequent books, though to be honest, I do not hold much hope for this happening.

Anastacia says

I originally reviewed the Source of Magic on the blog in 2009 [here](#), and wrote a series review about Xanth as well.

I'm re-reading most of the Xanth series as part of my Read all the Books challenge: the reviews will be even shorter and pithier than my usual short pithy reviews :) and will serve more as a reminder and a placeholder for which books I've re-read and when.

-

I know I liked this book a lot before, but re-reading it again as an adult it falls way short. It's just too much sexism/constant dirty jokes/lame puns that aren't even trying to be funny/did I mention the constant sexual jokes?

The plot is really thin on this one, too, and the climax of the novel - a debate about setting a demon free - falls really short. I feel like I'm missing the point of the scene or perhaps the entire novel, but I don't think it's me, I think it's how the scene is written.

It's just lacking the something something that makes most of these books so magical and fun to read - even though there's the constant dirty jokes and the women bashing - and this one really just disappointed me.

The only good thing about these books are how ridiculously fast they are to read.

Josiah says

Plot: C

Writing: F

Vocabulary: D

Level: Easy

Rating: R (sexism, adultery, demons, scatological humor, lascivious descriptions of women as objects only)

Worldview: Do what you want to do.

The first of the Xanth novels was somewhat witty, did a decent job of world-building, and established the protagonist as a upright if slightly immature young man. This second novel is a ridiculous bodice-ripper lacking a cohesive plot. All the characters are one-dimensional, and many are written contrary to their original depiction. There are numerous contradictions in the plotline. Nearly every single page explains all over again the protagonist's magical ability and why it makes a certain choice impossible - we only need the explanation maybe twice for the entire book. The puns and jokes in this story are pitiful. Need I go on? Don't waste your time!

Profundus Librum says

Régen volt, mikor utoljára humoros fantasyt olvastam – leszámítva az első részt – és felhőtlenül élveztem is. Régen a Skandar Graun-os könyveket imádtam (gondolom azok még ma is tetszenének), de aztán beleuntam kicsit – a nyíltan f?leg humoros írásokat, Herry Kóklert és társait meg hagyjuk is inkább! – és nyilván azokban az id?kben a Pratchett-könyvek is nagyon tetszettek, de azokba még hamarabb fáradtam bele.

[...]

Piers Anthony Xanth-sorozata nem ilyen fárasztó. Teli vannak b?dületes ökörségekkel ezek a regények is – papucsokat term? bokor és társaik –, végig nevetgélhetnek az olvasók, de alig „poénkodnak” bennük csak úgy egyszer?en. Sokkal többet nevethetünk a szerz? szarkasztikus (és sokszor cinikus) beszólásain.

[...]

Talán azért is, mert a szexista humor önmagában azért nem elég ahhoz, hogy teljesen kitöltsön egy egész könyv(sorozatot), és mivel a fantasy amúgy is kéz a kézben jár a kalandregényekkel, ezért szükség volt most is egy (nem annyira h?sies) küldetésre, pár mini-kalandra lebontva, amit h?seink – Bink, a f?szerepl?; egy valódi életre vágyó minigólem; egy kakaskodásra hajlamos kentaur; egy griffé változtatott katona és egy folyton unatkozó, vonakodó birodalmi gnóm-f?mágus – útjuk során rendre szállítanak is. Az első részben kiemeltém, hogy akkor a kalandok jórészt intellektusuknak hála sikerült inkább túlélni, mintsem a kardforgatásban való jártasságuknak köszönhet?en. Most – vagy akkor is, csak nem vettem észre? – a szerz? még tovább ment. Vándorlásuk során – a teljesség igénye nélkül – le kell gy?zniük sárkányt, ördögöt, démont, szirént, de ezen feladatok SOSEM olyan egyszer?ek, mint általában más regényekben szoktak lenni.

(Öld le/lopd el/surranj el mellette – aztán jöhet is a következ? feladat.) A kalandok most mind ilyen-olyan, de mindig valami komoly erkölcsi dilemmát okoznak a szerepl?knek, amikre legritkább esetben megoldás a kard (vagy a mágia), többször is csak a morális paradoxonokra adott – érett – válasszal folytatódhat az utazás és a nyomozás a mágia titokzatos – és halálos – forrása után.

B?vebben a blogon:

<http://profunduslibrum.blogspot.hu/20...>

Jenny says

Fabulous and innocent fantasy series. Xanth was my first experience into a magical world of fantasy years ago. Anthony uses puns and clever wordplays as part of the magical charm of the land of Xanth. This whole series makes our life here in "Mundania" seem so... well... mundane.

Sarah Lu says

I tried, I really tried. The way that my sister was talking about this book, it sounded like so much fun, and there was so much potential. But... I just can't like this book.

First off, I think that it could have been so much shorter. It takes so much time, trying to sound more important than it really is, that it just sucks pages into bizarre explanations.

Secondly, I can only take so much of reading about nymph's pert little butts, their supple arms, and how female they are. And pretty much the whole look on women in this book is pretty insulting. Female characters are shallow, caring only about their looks and how others perceive them and are often put down as being the classic ball-and-chain and at times it seems that women are just meant to be evil beings that are only on Xanth to torture the men and exploit their barbaric weaknesses. Maybe I'm reading too much into it, but by the end, it was just too much. And why did females seem to only have talents that would help them look nicer or change their appearance? Really? Why couldn't they have something actually useful? Okay. I'll stop here.

Third, the puns. I liked them at first, the puns about the creatures and plants in Xanth, the shoe tree that provides fresh shoes and such. But eventually, it just got a bit silly. Like the jellyfish. A fish made of jelly... That was a bit... thin, in my opinion.

Overall, I just couldn't get into this book. Perhaps it is because it was written for a different generation, but it just didn't settle with me. The entire book eventually reached an insanity that just wasn't fun anymore, and that just made me want to leave the book right there.

RachelAnne says

The sexist attitudes prevented me from at all enjoying the whimsy.

Lyn says

This story takes up where A Spell for Chameleon left off.

Like the Incarnations of Immortality series, it seemed that Anthony had a great idea to begin with and then the originality, and quality, dropped off exponentially. This book was saved by Anthony's unique gift and talent as a writer, but I never read any more of the series.

For pure fantasy fans.

Jill says

Eh. Nope.

This one is another series of mini adventures in the course of a larger quest undertaken by Bink, Chester, Crombie, Humphrey, and Grundy to find out the source of magic in Xanth. I was really hoping it would be less sexist than the first one, but it's not. I mean, there was no infuriating rape trial here, but otherwise it was just as bad.

Every woman in Xanth is described and, to at least some extent, valued in terms of her attractiveness. You get a description of almost every female character's breasts. Almost every single female character fits into one of three categories: 1) beautiful, innocent, not overly bright but very accommodating; 2) beautiful, seductive, manipulative, and conniving; or 3) ugly. The only exceptions I can think of (from this book AND the previous one) are Chameleon in her average phase, which doesn't appear in this book, and Bianca, Bink's mother, who is barely mentioned at all and, being the protagonist's mother, is naturally never presented as "sexy." Chameleon, the character with so much potential for awesomeness, is barely in this book at all, and when she is you don't see her because she is both in her ugly phase and extremely pregnant and is therefore hiding in her room out of embarrassment. And the usual sexism of women being nagging shrews, ball-and-chain wives, or sexy and tempting nymphomaniacs is sprinkled throughout.

There are two particular examples of sexism that really bothered me:

(minor spoilers)

(view spoiler)

(a bigger spoiler)

(view spoiler)

I WANT to like these books, I really do. I expect the constant puns could get tiresome if you read the books too frequently, but there's really a lot that I like here. There are interesting takes on magic and exciting plot developments. There are witticisms and quirky creatures. I hate to throw the baby out with the bathwater here. But you know what? There are a lot of books in the world to be read that offer the good things without the addition of flagrant, nonstop sexism. So I don't really think I should bother to plod through the Xanth series when I could move on to one of those instead. So goodbye Xanth. I really wanted this to work out, but I'm done. Time to clear the rest of the series off my to-read list.

Shane says

My 12 year-old really liked -A Spell for Chameleon- so now we're on to the next book (can't say I'm all that excited).

So my reaction to this book is the same as my reaction to the re-read of A Spell for Chameleon. Too much sexual innuendo for kids. Too much "theory" for kids. Not serious enough for adults. Not funny enough for adults. Every woman is defined by her looks and made to be either a sexual object or basically "not a woman".

So again I ask who are these books written for? If I at age 41 (1000's of books later) was having trouble interpreting the the ethical debate about whether to set the demon free then it can't be for kids right? Then add in the comments about sex, temptation, the descriptions of the women and you think this must be for adults. But the story itself is "lite" and filled with silly puns, the kind of stuff you find in kids books.

Anyway my boy's 13 now and he liked it (I'm assuming because of the sex references). He says he wants to read more and I remember Castle Roogna being my favorite of the first 3 books so I guess we'll move on to that one and hopefully like it more.

Eric Moreno says

I was unsure what to think of the Xanth universe after the first book. Admittedly this is still very early in the series, but I have formulated an opinion. The world the Piers has created resembles a cross between 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Looney tunes' with traditional fantasy characters. Our heroes never feel as if they are in peril during their adventures, most of the situations range from comical to strange. This is not to say I didn't enjoy the story, far from it. I love a good fantasy story with some comedy. It's not quite Terry Pratchett but still an enjoyable romp that you can pick up whenever and have a quick read.

Jason Cook says

Like its predecessor, A Spell for Chameleon, this book is a very pleasant diversion from the mediocrity of daily life. Anthony has a special gift for creating characters who in some way go against fantasy stereotypes in the way they act, look, and think. The Xanth books are short enough that you can dive in and get a good sense of the unfolding story within the first chapter. I do wish more attention had been given to the characters of Chameleon and Millie the Ghost, both of whom are largely sidelined, but as Chameleon is a big part of the preceding book and Millie is a big part of the following book, this is a small gripe.

Jessie says

If you loved the first book you may like this one.

I couldn't ignore the commentary on women because it never stops, ever. I don't know if Piers Anthony was bitter but that makes it not worth reading for me.

Also, the continuous lusting descriptions of the centaurs ass. No one needs to read from the inner mind of a man who seems to think a horse's hind end is the most beautiful thing he sees.
