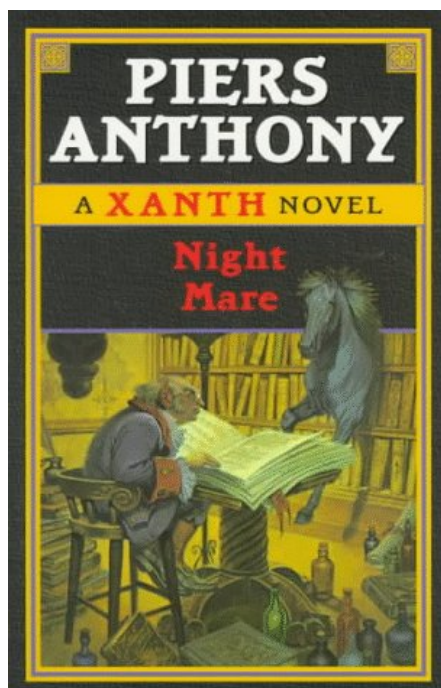




Night Mare

Piers Anthony

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Night Mare Piers Anthony

Although the Nextwave of barbarian warriors was invading Xanth, Mare Imbrium discovered that ever since she had gained the half soul, the night mare had begun to mishandle her job of delivering bad dreams. Exiled to the day world with a message for King Trent, Mare met the relentless, unforgiving Horseman. For the night mare, it began to be all a horrible nightmare!

From the Paperback edition.

Night Mare Details

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Author : Piers Anthony

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From Reader Review Night Mare for online ebook

Swankivy says

Imbrium is the main character of this story. She's the author's first female protagonist in this series, and though she is a horse (a night mare to be exact), she's still handled with the same sort of disrespect that Anthony frequently frames his female characters. At one point she is made powerless because a man tricks her into being dominated by him (he gets on her back and fits her with a bit, and she can't escape), and later the same man turns out to be a shapeshifter who dominates her by shifting into his horse form while she's "in season." Convenient, no, that the female's one weakness is her complete inability to resist the sexy man? Her urges overcome her and she's done in by her own attraction! This is the kind of thing that makes a lot of these books sound like a disturbing boy fantasy. That stuff can really be dangerous. But I'll look at the story too.

It's pretty inventive, though transparent in places. I still like the "gourd" world--the dream underground of sorts where nightmares come from. It was very clear that the man wearing a gold band was the same person as the horse wearing it, so I don't know what Anthony was trying to pull with that revelation. I also thought the succession of kings was interesting . . . the existing king was in an apparently hypnotic state and couldn't rule any more, so the successor got on the throne, and one by one their consciousnesses were captured by the Horseman. The rule was that Xanth could only be ruled by a Magician-class talented person. And when they start running out of possible kings, oh dearie me, it strikes them to wonder . . . hey, maybe we could get chicks to do it! Girl kings! No one ever thought of that before, even though the definitive factor for eligibility was supposed to be their magical strength. The very fact that anyone had to consider this a revelation is pretty telling. But for some reason, especially when I was a kid, I found it engaging to find out who'd be the next king to lead Xanth through an influx of attacks from Mundania while fearing being the next to be captured.

Cottens says

L'auteur sait y faire ! Cette fois-ci, plus question de suivre Bink ou une de ses connaissances : on se retrouve en compagnie de Imbri, une cavale de la nuit vraiment très attachante. Une nouvelle façon d'explorer le pays magique nous est ainsi offerte. Bien évidemment, l'humour est toujours là et surtout, toujours aussi bon !

Data says

In his way, the author is trying to support women's equality, but it is just a little too condescending from the height of male superiority. The horses are a little too fantasitcal for me

Amanda Orneck says

Frustrating though imaginative, mean-spirited and misogynistic, an example of how not to portray women in fiction. It saddens me to say that this will be the last Xanth novel I read for the foreseeable future. Once I slogged through Night Mare I no longer wanted to spend time with this writer, and it's for the strangest reason: This book, featuring a female protagonist destined to save her kingdom from ultimate destruction, is

just a diatribe against women.

Imbri is a former Night Mare, a horse that brings bad dreams to all the people in Xanth. After the events of Ogre, Ogre she is no longer able to do her job properly, and so she's fired and sent to help stave off the next major invasion threatening Xanth. Not only is a barbaric army cutting a swath down through Xanth toward the seat of power, someone is also magically taking out the kings of the nation, and no one can figure out why.

Where Ogre, Ogre represents the best of Piers Anthony, the next book in the series manages to be his worst. Imbri and her companions are constantly demeaned, and usually it's the women themselves that are constantly talking about the weaknesses of their gender. Over and over again the women in this book opine that they don't really want to be valued members of society, they just want to be longed for by their men, that their intelligence is the ugliest trait, and that they should use their bodies as bait for the enemy. This misogyny culminates in a climax scene where a character must conquer her own weak feminine biology in order to prevail against her enemy.

I wish I could recommend skipping this book, but Fantasy readers tend to be completionists, and that requires reading even the horrible entries in a series. For me, it's going to take a long time before I will be able to get back to Xanth. Let's just say, I'll need to spend some time away from the Gap Chasm in order to forget it.

Kyle says

I rate it a great big, meigh.

Michael says

For some reason, this is the only one of my Xanth books which I have kept since my own early adulthood, when I devoured all of them (8 of them, I think, at the time) in a remarkably short time and then lost all interest before the next one had come out. This is the sixth in the series, and it certainly wasn't the best. I may have held on to it because of the extensive use of the nightmare world of the "gourds," but I suspect that it was just the luck that in this case the cover never fell off.

At the time I first read, I probably would have given it three or four stars. I re-read it more recently during a period of sadness, because I wanted something simple and familiar, and even for that purpose it was a bit too silly. It's written for a childlike audience, and in order to get anything out of it, you still have to be pretty childish. The story centers on a magic horse whose job is to deliver horrific images to day-dwelling creatures, but who has been granted a soul and is finding her work increasingly difficult due to empathy. She finds herself caught up in an invasion of the magical realm of Xanth by "mundanes" from our world who hope to conquer and destroy. The mundanes have a secret weapon that eliminates each new King of Xanth in succession, leaving it without leadership in its time of need.

In all, the writing is competent enough, and I enjoyed all the puns when I was a kid, but this really isn't my sort of thing anymore.

R.S. Merritt says

So nostalgic going back and rating this. I think I still have a few of the Xanth series floating around in my paperback boxes. Really was one of my favorite series as a Young Adult.

Athimar says

Night Mare is one of Mr. Anthony's best early Xanth novels. It nicely ends the first chapter in the ever continuing Xanth trilogy. It brings all the main players from the first five novels together in one major story arc - a new wave of ferocious warriors from Mudania, led by a mysterious figure known only as The Horseman, is making its way through Xanth toward Castle Roogna. Somehow they have been able to incapacitate the King of Xanth, and then his heir, and then the next in line, and so forth, and so on. The Night Stallion sends an emissary from the Gourd, Mare Imbri, to work with Chameleon and stop the kings of Xanth from being taken out before there aren't any more sorcerers left to fill the position.

As many of the characters from the first four novels are in that line of succession, we get to revisit all our old friends. In particular, I was very happy to read about Bink again - the main character from the first two Xanth novels. And man - I forgot what a bad arse he could be! In this novel, he's like an older Arnold Schwarzenegger - single-handedly kicking people's butts until he too falls prey to the strange illness affecting one king after the other.

This story is excellent and well thought out. When you get to the end and all is revealed, many of the events that occurred earlier in the novel become much more meaningful - in fact, I think that this is one novel that deserves at least one re-read so that you can appreciate all the hidden setup work Mr. Anthony put into the story.

Also, Mr. Anthony brings one large inequality in Xanth society to an end. Let all the sorceresses in the land rejoice!

And yes, off course there are a great many puns for you to enjoy! I give the novel 4 out of 5 stars. Thanks for the novel Piers!

Renée Fornelli says

This series is such a cute, refreshing world to relax in. It is full of lovable, interesting, optimistic characters and creative, hilarious puns.

Like popcorn, this novel can be finished off quickly and with little remorse. I read it over the course of a few hours each night before bed, but only stopped reading because I had to. All the plot twists combined with the riddle-filled prophesies made me wish I could just spend a full day reading to see what happens next!

I was totally wrong in trying to figure out the line of succession for Xanthian kings after Dor; I never could have imagined who the last two kings would be.

While I predicted the true identity of the Horseman long before it was revealed, I wasn't quite certain about my assumption -- I was actually second-guessing myself and wavering quite a bit by the time Chameleon and Humfrey explained the truth to Imbri.

The ending was excellent -- I felt completely satisfied and am looking forward to seeing what happens in the next book.

I recommend this for kids, or for people who, like myself, are young at heart.

David Sarkies says

A nightmare is actually a mythological creature

30 December 2011

Well, at this point in the Xanth series we are starting to move away from the main characters from the previous books to single books, set in Xanth, evolving around a new character. In this novel we meet Mare Imbrium, a Night Mare. Nightmares are given the task of carrying bad dreams to the people of Xanth. However Imbrium's problem is that she has obtained half a soul (which she got from the previous book) and this has affected her ability to carry out her task.

Piers Anthony does like playing with words, but then he was not the first person to connect nightmares with horses. I have seen this a while back in the worlds of Dungeons and Dragons, where nightmares are from the nether regions, and are dark demonic horses that travel on paths of fire. However Anthony's nightmare is a little tamer than the nastier creatures that appear in Dungeons of Dragons. However, a little research has revealed that nightmares have been connected with horses long before the development of Dungeons and Dragons, and in fact are demonic creatures in German folklore (as is evident by this painting, so it seems that Anthony's pun has backfired):

The other thing that I immediately noticed after reading the outline of the book, and that is the name of the nightmare. Mare Imbrium: that is the name of a region of the lunar surface which, for some strange reason, are called seas (even though there is no water in them – Mare is a Latin word that refers to a large body of water). I would have never picked that up when I originally read the book, however it has since jumped out at me from my computer screen upon noticing it this time.

Charlie Devlin says

The story works very well as a culmination of the books that had followed. Seeing most of the main characters from preceding books play, sometimes small, yet useful parts in the story was quite enjoyable. While I didn't find myself to invested in the main heroine, I still found her a fine character and a fine catalyst for the stories monumental war on Xanth.

Shawna says

loved it, but a little slower then the others.

Sarah J says

Xanth is a fantasy novel that is based almost entirely on wordplay, specifically puns. The series occupies a strange space between silly and weird. Anthony has some odd opinions on themes, such as sex, racism,

prejudice, growing up, and the use of magic in everyday life. The writing vacillates between heavy-handed condescending to extended analysis of magic, science, and the application of the rules of Xanth. Some love it, some hate it; I personally thought it was a strange read but harmless, although I doubt I'll read each book twice. One thing about Anthony, he has a very complicated history and genealogy of Xanth and its characters and you have to appreciate how he always finds ways to connect them from book to book.

Moir Russell says

I think this is the only Anthony book I've ever read. I don't know why I never read more of him so I could have the horrific double-vision OH GOD NO experience later in life so many of my GoodReads peers did. I mean, that sounds so appealing!I think I was distracted by Le Guin.

Don LaFountaine says

I liked the book, but had trouble getting into the first half of the story. It probably deserves 3 1/2 stars instead of the three I gave it.

For those who read *Ogre, Ogre*, you will find some of the same characters appear in this story, including the main character, Mare Imbrie. Still carrying a half of a soul, Imbrie has not been doing well as a Night Mare. She has trouble being as sinister as she needs to be, and even dreams of seeing the rainbow. The Night Stallion sends her out into the day, with a warning to King Trent to "Beware the horseman!" However, King Trent becomes enchanted. The Kingship falls to Prince Dor, until the pattern repeats itself. While Xanth is losing King after King to some sort of enchantment, the Nextwave is progressing across the land. Imbrie even becomes captured by the nefarious Horseman, only to find out how cruel Mundanes can be. As time passes, it become apparent that the future fate of Xanth is dependent upon this Night Mare.

Fans of the series should enjoy this book. Older characters such as Bink, Chameleon, King Trent and Queen Iris make an appearance, while sharing space with the second generation characters such as Dor, Irene, Chet, Chem, Tandy and Smash. And it is the story of Night Mare Imbrie that brings this cast of characters together.

Lizzy says

Very enjoyable.

William says

Sometimes when feeling down and in need of an escape, I visit *Xanth*. Again, I am glad I did as **Night Mare** is a light, fun, fast, enjoyable read.

Anthony employs the same successful formula as compared to prior installments.. Yet he still manages to keep each forthcoming story fresh and creative.

This particular volume reunited me with several favorite characters from all prior editions. The dream world

aspect continues to be fascinating and entertaining. The major mystery revelation is fairly obvious. Most readers will likely solve it early on. The finale, especially the last sentence, is very sweet.

Highly recommended for those seeking a brief entertaining escape from reality.

J Austill says

This, the 6th Xanth book, is sort of hit or miss for me. On one hand, it is the first time that we get a female protagonist and it turns out that Piers does just fine writing for the opposite sex. It also continues the new trend from the last book of having a non-human protagonist. She's a horse. Well, more correctly a night mare which is a horse which delivers dreams. Imbrium has found herself changed from the other night mares after gaining part of a soul at the end of the previous book and as such has to go off on her own quest to discover her true love and place in life.

This book does establish a few of the rules of Xanth, which I mentioned previously in my A Spell for Chameleon review. This makes Night Mare a must read in the Xanth series.

The rules of Xanth:

1. Xanth is a magical world which exists in parallel to our own. Everyone born in Xanth (human or otherwise) is born with a magical talent.
2. Each magical talent is different and none is duplicated though they can be similar.
3. Not all talents are equal. The most powerful talents are considered Magician (or Sorceress) caliber.
4. The King of Xanth is the person who has the most powerful talent, as this allows them to protect their subjects. This fact disregards gender. The Queen of Xanth is the person who is married to the king.
5. Any person who does not have a magical talent was not born in Xanth (see rule 1) and is therefore exiled from Xanth (to prevent illegal immigration).

In particular, this book sets up the rules for ascension to ruler. The plot of the book being that some unknown person wants to eliminate the government of Xanth by incapacitating the King. We then find out the order of ascension to the throne and who can qualify for that job.

But here is where we have the major flaw of the book. After establishing who are the magician level persons in Xanth and what order they will ascend to the throne, the author seems to get a bit bored with it. We have to trudge through the list with each having some turn at the throne. Only once the sequence is complete does the plot continue and resolve. It seems to me that once the sequence has been set up, it does not necessarily have to go through to conclusion, we can move on.

Sam Lackey says

Night Mare reads like a lazy attempt to revisit all of the characters from the previous novels in the Xanth series. It will be the last Xanth book that I read, and probably the last Piers Anthony book that I read.

While younger readers might appreciate the childish humor, mainly in the form of puns and wordplay, Night Mare-- like almost all of the other Xanth novels, offers nothing for someone wanting to delve into a good fantasy novel.

There really isn't anything redeeming for younger readers, either. Women and girls exist in the world of Xanth as sexual objects. Though, in Night Mare, a few women finally take part in battle and take the throne, it is only a few pages of the story before the girls fall. Anthony's characters take a lot about the roles of girls. Nymphs are used in battle to lure away the invading army.

Even the hero of Night Mare, a horse whose previous job was to deliver bad dreams, cannot resist the antagonist when he is in horse form. One character's magical ability is sex appeal. Another character's magical ability is to become more attractive, but less intelligent (while becoming later more ugly but smart).

I could go on about what Night Mare fails to do, but it really isn't worth it. Skip this book, and skip all Xanth books.

Christian Spließ says

Es ist schon betrüblich, dass es die Xanth-Romane erstens nicht mehr auf Deutsch gibt und zweitens dass die neuere Romane überhaupt nicht übersetzt worden sind. Vielleicht sind sie deswegen in Deutschland nicht so populär und bekannt wie die Werke von Terry Pratchett, es kann auch sein, dass sie gerne nur als "leichte Kost für zwischendurch" behandelt werden. Nach dem Motto: "Liest man eines, kennt man alle."

Sicher - die Struktur ist bei allen Bänden gleich: Heldin - in diesem Fall die Night Mare Imbri - bricht zur typischen Queste auf und der Roman arbeitet dann mit allen Mitteln der Heldenreise, die man so kennt. Allerdings ist das ja nur der Rahmen, in dem sich Protagonisten tummeln. In "Night Mare" gibts davon etliche, es ist fast ein Best-Of der bisherigen wichtigeren Persönlichkeiten des Landes. König Trent, Bink, Dor und Irene - Grundy, die Sirene, der gute Magier Humpfrey - während der Handlung lernt man die fast alle kennen. Ach so, ja, die Handlung: Nachdem die Night Mare Imbri eine halbe Seele bekommen hat, bringt sie als Bringer von Alpträumen nicht mehr so die Leistung, die sie bringen könnte. Daraufhin wird sie vom Night Stallion in den Tag geschickt mit der Aufgabe vor der nächsten Invasion Xanths zu warnen. Imbri lernt auf ihrer Reise das Day Horse kennen, begegnet dem Horsemen, vor dem man sich in Acht nehmen sollte und erfährt, dass man "die Kette unterbrechen" muss. Die Lage verschlimmert sich, als die Könige einer nach dem anderen geistlos zu Boden fallen - haben die Invasoren einen Xanth-Abrünnigen unter sich? Wie alle Xanth-Bücher ist es extrem kurzweilig und ja, sicherlich kann man es als reine nette Unterhaltungslektüre durchlesen. Was daran schlimm sein soll, keine Ahnung. Dabei packt Anthony aber gelegentlich auch durchaus Nachdenkenswertes in seine Geschichte - und das Problem vom Imbri, weder der einen noch der anderen Welt so richtig anzugehören ist sehr modern. Zudem: So vorhersehbar ist die Handlung nun auch wieder nicht und eine Fülle von Ideen und Wortspielen sorgt - im Englischen zumindest - für dezentes Grinsen. Da die Charaktere alle sympathisch sind und Imbri zum Schluss des Romans eine Entscheidung treffen muss, die ihr das Herz brechen wird - bekommt man Leser nette Unterhaltung mit einem Schuss Philosophie geboten. Wenn diese auch nicht so deutlich ist und man sie leicht übersehen kann. Und ja, einige Episoden sind in diesem Roman auch nicht so gelungen oder einfach zu lang: Die Hochzeits-Szene, die Geschichte mit der Sphinx etwa. Aber alles in allem: Es ist angenehme, gut gemachte Unterhaltung, die ab und an sogar Tiefgang hat. Und zudem: Anthony ist ein Meister darin, aus Wortspielen wirklich amüsante Szenen zu basteln. Oder Dinge. Oder Pflanzen. Manchmal ist es schon etwas kindisch, aber gerade das macht Xanth auch aus: Ernstnehmen darf sich gerne Tolkien oder Lewis...
