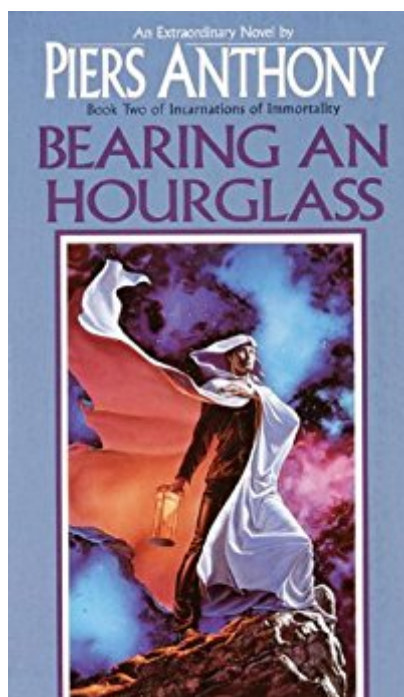


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Bearing An Hourglass (Incarnations Of Immortality Book 2)



Synopsis

When life seemed pointless to Norton, he accepted the position as the Incarnation of Time, even though it meant living backward from present to past. The other seemingly all-powerful incantations of Immortality--Death, Fate, War, and Nature--made him welcome. Even Satan greeted him with gifts. But he soon discovered that the gifts were cunning traps and he had become enmeshed in a complex scheme of the Evil One to destroy all that was good....From the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

"Bearing an Hourglass" is the second volume of Piers Anthony's Incarnations of Immortality series, dealing with the Incarnation of Time. The series began successfully with "On a Pale Horse", but this instalment is a little more cautious in approach, and suffers somewhat from sequel syndrome. Like several other characters from the Incarnations series, Norton is just an ordinary man who unexpectedly has the mantle of Chronos (Time) thrust upon him. He must learn to fulfil the duties of his office and deal with its peculiarities- such as living backwards in time! The temporal quirks and paradoxes that Norton must explore create some added interest in the storyline. Overall, however, the plot lacks the verve and interest of the first book, wandering from the path in places and losing

direction. As a whole, the series is definitely worth reading, and "Bearing an Hourglass" is worth reading as a part of the series. As a stand-alone volume, however, it doesn't quite satisfy. Read it in context: the complex interlinking plots of the seven books that make up the Incarnations series are partially explained by this book, but it remains one of the weaker links in the series. 6 stars out of 10

. . . from the first "Incarnations of Immortality" novel. "Bearing an Hourglass" deals with the character of Time. While the introductory couple of chapters set the stage rather well, the remainder of the novel fails in its promise. Norton, in his role as Chronos, traveling backward and forward through time, encounters numerous attempts to dissuade him in his purpose -- to fight against Satan and the forces of evil. However, the "encounters" don't seem realistic (even for a fantasy novel). The freshness of the first novel is almost totally absent, as is the depth of character development. When I first read this volume some 8-10 years ago, I found it one of the weaker efforts of the series. A recent re-reading has not disabused me of this notion. Worth a read as part of the series -- but standing alone, it is a grave disappointment.

Seriously. I wanted to like this book. The concept was so fun. The incarnation on time living backwards? sweet. But somehow Piers Anthony managed to make the whole thing boring. Perhaps it was the quasi sci-fi "magic come out of the closet and the Earth it made whole again" setting. Perhaps it was the plodding pace. Perhaps it was the over-long interludes in supposed anti-matter galaxies that (SPOILER) were just illusions. Do I feel bad publishing a spoiler? NO! Because I they didn't feel so much like satanic illusions (per the plot) as weak filler for an underdeveloped plot. Sure, some campy fun that makes laughs of pulp sci-fi and epic fantasy... but for every page of intentionally overwrought "illusion" I would have preferred a single paragraph of well-written storyline. I finished the book because I like to finish books and I kept hoping it would get better. It didn't.

I enjoyed the first "Incarnation" story "On a Pale Horse" very much, and hoped the rest of the books would hold up as well. The rest of the series follow pretty much the same format, but each tells the story of a different aspect of humanity and life: Death, Time, Fate, War, Nature and Evil. The stories vary in the way that the protagonists deal with adversity using the powers of their respective roles as these incarnations. Bearing an Hourglass starts out in the usual story about the life of the protagonist, in this case a wanderer who doesn't think he'll ever settle down. The critical moment is when they are faced with the prospect of immortality in exchange for service to all of humanity, and

in this case, the lead character is faced with saving his love from a sorrowful death in exchange for becoming the incarnation of time, Chronos. The story takes many twists as Satan tries to take advantage of the new Chronos's lack of experience, as Satan tries deception after deception to prevent Chronos from foiling the doings of Evil. I enjoyed the story very much, and would recommend the whole series to anyone familiar with Anthony's other work. It's also a good introduction to Anthony, though I would also recommend the 2 "Adept" series. Both "Incarnations" and "Adept" blend magic/fantasy and technology in interesting ways to create universes that stand out from typical sci-fi or fantasy.

After falling in love with the first book of this series, *On a Pale Horse*, I was very excited to pick up this book and continue in the adventures. Sorry to say, I was very disappointed by this book. For one thing, it took a quarter of the book just to get the hero of this book, Norton, to assume the office of Time. At least half of this book was spent in what Norton believed to be another world having experiences that had very, very little to do with the story. It did show a little bit of Norton's character, but it was a bothersome distraction from the real story. This means that the real meat of the story was only told in 25% of the book which, to me, is just a waste of time. This book was really confusing and I felt that Piers Anthony could have done a better job of explaining of the office of Chronos, the Incarnation of Time. I felt I understood Death's office very well from the first book but this book did not really show how Chronos worked in his office. The only power he demonstrated did not demonstrate the responsibilities of his office. I will probably pick up the other books because other reviews here seem to indicate that this is the most confusing and disliked book of the series. I would recommend this book if you are going to read the entire series... but I wonder if the rest of this series could be told without this story.

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