



The Alchemist

Donna Boyd

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In a sweeping epic of dazzling magic, soaring suspense, and dark longing, three immortal souls are united by fate and a fearless ambition that will change the course of history—even as it destroys their own way of life. .

. .

On an upper floor of a plush, high-security building on Central Park West, an elegant man sits in the office of Dr. Anne Kramer, confessing to the heinous murder that has horrified the modern world. Randolph Sontime is renowned for his personal charm, and Dr. Kramer is fighting to keep from falling victim to it. For the first time in her life, she truly understands the meaning of the word “charisma.” Not knowing that her own destiny is irrevocably tied to his, Anne Kramer listens to the story of Sontime’s life.

“It began with the magic, you see. And so, perforce, must I.” As a boy named Han at the House of Ra, an isolated oasis in the Egyptian desert of a far ancient time, Sontime lived in privilege. There the chosen were trained in the science of alchemy—magic, philosophy, miracles. Only two other initiates were as skilled as he: Akan, quiet and studious, a boy whose thirst for knowledge was matched only by his hunger for truth; and Nefar, beautiful and brilliant, a girl as filled with wonder and unfathomable ambition as Han himself. Together they discovered that in union, theirs was a power unmatched in the physical world.

But even in the House of Ra, there were boundaries to be observed, knowledge that only the masters understood and feared. As the threesome’s thirst for answers—and for each other—deepened, they were tempted by the dark arts that they had sworn to avoid. *“Look at three magnificent youths who stand astride your world and scoff at the rules you must obey. . . . Look at us, and call us gods.”* Their power was palpable, their desire total—until the fateful moment when their alliance was forever damned, their gifts horribly corrupted.

A seductive work that seethes with mystery and passion, *The Alchemist* hurtles readers back through time to an era when magic was sacred and the workings of the world lay in the hands of a few gifted, but tortured souls. In a stunning feat of unbridled imagination, Donna Boyd has created her most hypnotic novel to date.

The Alchemist Details

Date : Published 2002 by Ballantine

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Author : Donna Boyd

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From Reader Review The Alchemist for online ebook

Anita says

Good story of immortal magicians from Egypt to the present. DNA, magic, and eternity.

Jennifer says

This story of Ancient Egypt and dark magic could have been more enjoyable if it had been written slightly differently. The Alchemist contains a great concept that was written well, but not in a style I particularly like. The wording is heavy on the description and that seems to prevent the storyline from gathering any steam. This book spans from Ancient Egypt to present day in just 240 pages, so the great ideas presented in the book aren't expanded on much. The book is short, but by no means an easy read.

I've very much enjoyed some of Donna Boyd's other books, but The Alchemist doesn't come close. The book just isn't that memorable. If you're interested in Egyptology, immortal beings or magic, you can find a decent story in The Alchemist, but nothing truly fantastic.

Cornelia says

I loved this book, it's an incredible historical fantasy that begins in ancient Egypt and moves up to modern times. Wonderful characters. So intriguing. A beautiful read.

Catie says

Have you ever wished to be immortal? Sure we have all thought of how amazing it would be to live while, "so many years ending and beginning that you can no longer remember why it seemed important to keep count of them at all." What if you could live forever with magic at your hands? Donna Boyd digs deeper into this fantasy with the compelling novel "The Alchemist." This book will mesmerize you with one twist after another.

Donna Boyd's use of imagery made this story all the more bewildering. Every emotion, every sound, every person, and new setting was examined and described in minute detail. These details made me feel such a range of emotions. This style really allowed the reader to fully indulge in the writing and feel apart of the group of kids, going on this trek of many years. These kids aren't your average kids though.

These kids grew up in the House of Ra, at the tip of the desert in Egypt, centuries ago. The House of Ra is a magical place filled with young students and wise masters. They always have magnificent feasts, and there is never a need to wash your clothes because you are given a completely new outfit everyday. It is an oasis with waterfalls and light shining beautifully threw the trees, and many secret tunnels, that should be left alone. The students there learn math, science, history, and languages, but not like our versions. Instead they learn

alchemy, and history of the beginning of time, and ancient languages that are long dead. They learn to soar with wings in the sky and to make gold with sand and water. The three students that this book focuses on are Han, Nefar, and Akan.

These three kids have amazing powers and abilities, that I won't go too much into detail about, so I don't spoil the best parts. They go on an amazing trek through the desert after burning their home to the ground, they create a new paradise that Han turns away from. Betrayed by the only ones he loved, and created a new identity as the Dark Warrior. In doing so he was able to gain a lot of wisdom and strength. His powers grew daily, and had no one to please or enjoy it with. One day his past caught up with him, one of the old masters survived the fire. They joined allegiances and he taught Han all he knew. When Han felt ready they went off to warn his friends Nefar and Akan about the doom that would come to the utopia they built together if they didn't reverse the spell. All I will say is that the plan backfired and they all split ways, and only Akan and Han ever met again, only centuries later. This time Akan had an even more difficult and forbidden spell that he wanted to perform, again Han walked away and again the two friends were separated.

Then there is one last surprise one last thing Han has to take care of at the end, another one of Akan's spells, that took a few thousand years to perfect and perform, gone horribly wrong. He has brought one of their past friends back to life. Instead of the friend they loved, Akan brought back a blood thirsty monster. Han has to kill her/him. Twenty years later he tells the story of murder to a psychologist. Now she has to decide if he is guilty or not.

This book has become one of my top favorite books. Boyd has such a colorful imagination, and I especially loved how the timeline went from A.D. to present day, with an ever changing setting. The book has humorous correlations with historical facts, that I had just read about in history class. The author put in so many unexpected twists that made it hard to go into detail in this review. I tried as hard as I could to not put in any spoilers. This is definitely a must read, but also definitely PG13, or a more mature audience.

Chris says

I was in a bookshop and saw this book and liked its title and its cover art, so I made a mental note to pick up a copy from the library.

When I did, months later, I read the book and enjoyed it.

Some time after, my mom and I were shopping in another bookstore and I saw the book and recommended it to her. I picked it up and flipped through it, scratching my head and wondering what the heck was going on.

Turns out I'd read the wrong "Alchemist" - I had meant to grab the one by P. Coelho, but instead I got this one.

My mom and I laughed at my stupidity. Now you can too if you'd like.

April says

Embarrassing confession to make. I've heard from several people how much they enjoyed, "The Alchemist." One of my Goodreads friends reviewed it and I thought, "Oh! I've heard a lot of people say they like that, I'll have to read it." Didn't pay attention to the author. Went to the library, searched and this came up. I read the whole thing, thinking, "ok it's slightly entertaining, but really?! What's all the fuss." I probably wouldn't have even finished it except that I kept thinking it must redeem itself to have so many fans. Boyd writing isn't bad but I found the whole story slightly. . . gratuitous in so many respects. And I have only myself to blame for not being more observant!

Benjamin Thomas says

A charismatic man enters a therapist's office in New York City after having committed one of the most hi-vis murders in history. But he claims he is not of our modern era, instead he is an immortal, born into ancient Egypt and going by the name "Han". He proceeds to tell the therapist the story of his long life, and indeed, this is the vast majority of the novel. Han was a student of the House of Ra, where the secrets of magic and science, alchemy and engineering are learned. Along with his two best friends and co-students, Akan (a boy) and Nefar (a girl), they discover that the power than can jointly wield has unsurpassed potential. They discover the secrets of immortality and though they know they have the power to be gods, they desire to use their power to bring about a better world.

The plot was filled with intrigue and open-ended possibilities. I had no clue as to how it would turn out; I just knew I wanted to know what happened next. That for me is the mark of a great read. Ms Boyd used a style in her story telling which is very picturesque, almost poetic even, that was very refreshing. That sort of thing has turned me off before, but this time it was absolutely the right way to go. It made Han's story even more believable because it was like this man really had lived through several centuries, really had been near the seat of power in different cultures, etc. Han has a "voice" here like few other novels I've read. If there is one thing I wished for in this book it would be for more of the historical eras to be fleshed out. Instead of skipping 2,000 years, I would have loved to read about Han's adventures during that time...but then I suppose the real story would have gotten lost in the sheer size of such a novel (or series).

Anyway, this book was a very pleasant surprise; take it from a guy who reads at least 100 books per year, many of them fantasy and historical novels, this one's a keeper!

Celina says

My absolute facorite book...brought me to another world while so much was happening in my life at that time.

Nancy says

Great premise with magic, alchemy, Ancient Egypt. All things I love, but the story..while interesting...did drag somewhat. I found that I didn't really care what happened to the three main characters that much after they find they are immortal and then get parted. There was good descriptive language and dialogue, but some of the dialogue was extremely trite and distracted me from the story. Not sad I read it, but wouldn't read it again. Quick read and some good scenes.

Brendan says

There needs to be more of these.

Denise says

Had planned to read The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho but mistakenly picked up this book with the same title. Ugh! Disturbing! Scary. Not enjoyable to read.

Gwen Ostrinski says**A Comment on Human Nature**

This book kept me interested from the very beginning. What could possibly happen if someone could live forever? What would the consequences be? A thoughtful read.

Katie says

Very Anne Rice-y. So much of this book is unnecessary detail. It was hard to get into and finally became interesting over halfway through. I feel it could have been a short story.

Robin says

This is one of those books that I found randomly on Bookshare while searching for something else.

Juliette says

I set off to read this book (and not the other one) because I enjoyed the werewolf books by Donna Boyd. Though her first person storytelling worked well in The Passion and The Promise, I'm not so sure it worked as well for this book. I'm also complaining because it was too short. I would have enjoyed much more storytelling of the House of Ra and the character Darius who I found far more interesting than Nefar or even Han. Though I understand that this is a story of the three (Nefar, Han, and Akan) told from Han's point of view, it just wasn't enough for me. I wanted more of each of thier lives as alchemists. Though I give it three stars it was still a good book (if this is the book you are setting out to read).
