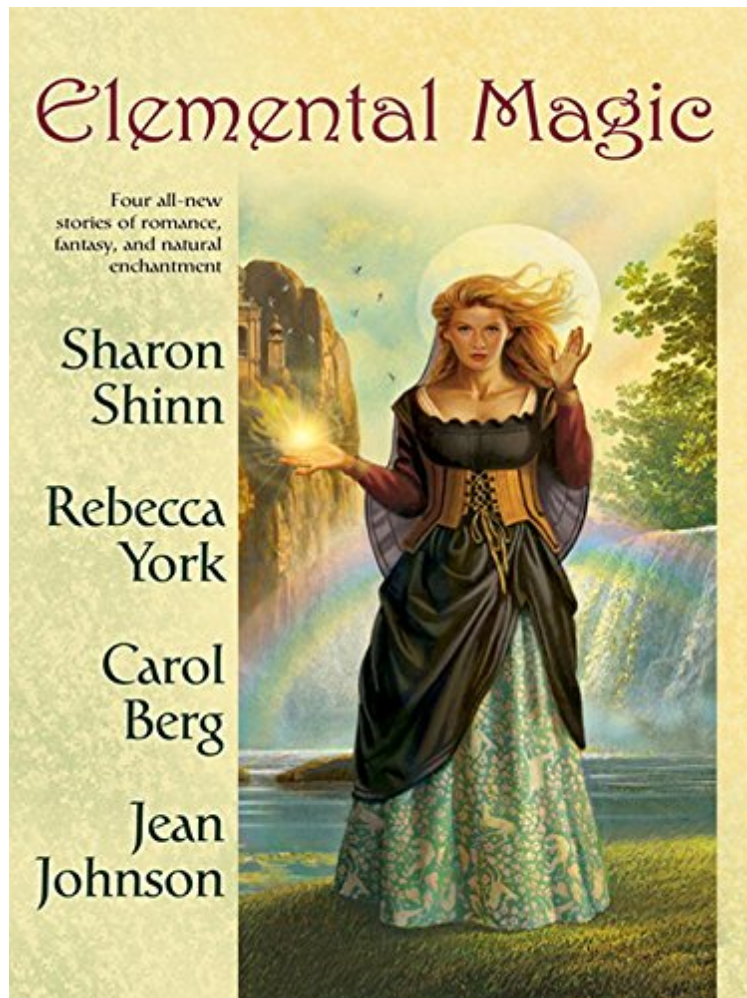


## Elemental Magic

Von Sharon Shinn, Rebecca York, Carol Berg, Jean Johnson  
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**Von Sharon Shinn, Rebecca York, Carol Berg, Jean Johnson : Elemental Magic** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Elemental Magic:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Three excellent and one good stories of mystical romanceVon Helen HancoxThis book consists of four stories, loosely themed around Air, Earth, Water and Flame. The stories are all widely different but each has its own fascinating concepts with appealing characters.BARGAIN WITH THE WIND by SHARON SHINNThis first story in the collection was a beguiling tale apparently set in England in the Regency period. Duncan Baler has recently inherited the house Grey Moraine after the death of his uncle and his cousin on the same day. Duncan arranges a social event at the house and it is gatecrashed by a beautiful young woman, Charis, who immediately catches Duncan's attention. Over the next week Duncan and Charis spend time together and then get married and Charis begins to settle into life as

Lady of the Manor. However things might not be as they seem. The whole story is narrated from the point of view of the housekeeper, Nettie, and she spends a great deal of her time listening at keyholes and overhearing conversations in other rooms. Nettie begins to suspect that Charis may have some secrets she is hiding from her husband. Why, for example, does she seem bent on alienating the next most important household in the county? Why is she so worried after hearing Nettie's explanations of the Air Spirits and the disastrous bargains young women will make with them to get what they want? What is Charis's secret and is she something other than she appears? This story is well written and always interesting as we learn, along with Nettie, in snatches of overheard conversation, what's actually going on. If this is set in the English Regency period there are some historical and language mistakes but they are common errors and don't detract too much from the story. It's an interesting read and wasn't at all predictable which I very much liked. Five stars.

**BIRTHRIGHT** by JEAN JOHNSON This story almost couldn't be more different than the first in this collection - one of the advantages (and sometimes disadvantages) of collections of this nature. This story is set in a fantasy world with mages and magical lore. Arasa is on a quest to discover whether she or her twin sister were the firstborn as there was some doubt at their birth. Arasa has discovered a way of finding out by retracing a walk that one of her ancestors did between "The Womb" and "The Heart". "the Heart" is the name of their major city but the only "Womb" she knows is in a faraway land. The story starts as Arasa is trying to find a good map of the route to the Womb of Tarden; she is almost tricked by an unscrupulous chap but fortunately a Mage who is also in the Inn offers her the use of a Truth Stone and it soon becomes apparent that the map-seller was trying to confuse her. In discussion with the Mage she very quickly discovers that she's on the wrong track for the "Womb" anyway and that it actually refers to a temple in her own land. She and the Mage, Elrik, agree to travel together to her land so that he can visit the Mage academy and so that she has some protection on the way. When they arrive Arasa discovers her twin has also discovered a way of finding the true firstborn but isn't willing to discuss it. She says that Arasa's method is better and so the twins set out on the journey with Elrik and her sister's fianc alongside. However there's some unexpected danger on the way and Arasa has to decide whether to step up to the position of power and authority that she has or to take the easier road which may have long-term negative consequences. There's a romance in this story between Arasa and Elrik which was very endearing to read and in fact the whole story was enjoyable from beginning to end. The setting was different, the writing style good and the overall story was very well done, although I felt the pronunciation guide given at the start was rather too self-important for a short story! Five stars.

**UNMASKING** by CAROL BERGY Yet another great story, and another completely different read from the other two so far in this collection. In this story Joelle is in training as a Searcher, a special kind of sorcerer for those who have the greatest magical skills. However she always seems to fail the final tests and so can't graduate to become a true Searcher and these failures are causing her great anguish. When trespassing at a sacred pool one night she sees a man who shouldn't be there and initially thinks he is a Warden, another kind of sorcerer, until her companion, Kenehyr, points out that his hands weren't clean (something that a true Warden would ensure). Joelle reports this to the magical authorities who conclude he must be the spy they have heard of from another land, trying to find out whether there is true magic within her country or just some illusions. A complex plan is created to trick this spy into believing that the people don't have real magic and Joelle is chosen to be part of this plan, along with a Tenyddar, a man with no magic who works on the land. However when Joelle meets her Tenyddar she recognises him instantly as the man at the pool and things start to get more complex. This story was fascinating, particularly with regard to the relationship between Joelle and Bran/Gareth as they try to trick the spy. Bran/Gareth's position in society is at the lowest point as a farmer without magic and yet Joelle begins to see that some people can make more of themselves than perhaps others might think. Equally he is able to help her to understand her failures and their significance. This isn't really a romance as the romantic element is tiny but it's an excellent story about understanding other people and the possibilities that exist within them. Five stars.

**HUNTRESS MOON** by REBECCA YORK This last story in the collection was not as enjoyable as the rest although still a reasonable read. It follows the variable fortunes of Zarah, a nobleman's daughter who has fallen on hard times. Her father has been executed for apparently embezzling money and her mother is dying of cancer; Zarah is told by Scanlon, head of the city White Flint, that if she agrees to spy on Griffin, head of Sun Acres, her mother will get healing treatment. Zarah's role, in spying on Griffin, will be that of his mistress. She eventually agrees, knowing that her own honour is less important than her mother's life. Zarah's journey to Sun Acres is dangerous but she is helped by Quinn, another of the slaves. When Zarah is chosen by Griffin and taken to his house she begins to question whether she should be spying on him because he seems to be a far more good and honourable man than Scanlon. However when he finds out that she is a spy things look bad for her. Quinn's role in the story becomes more important, and Zarah's magical skills prove to be a great help to Griffin. This story was written quite simply and without any great depth to the characters. I found the rapidity of Zarah's fall to slavery and then subsequent rise to a position of importance pretty startling, especially as everyone knew she had been a slave. I was also unsure about some of her motivations and of the almost instant 'falling in love' between hero and heroine. It was a pleasant enough read but lacked the depth of the other stories. Three Stars.

In conclusion, this is an excellent collection of short stories with three outstanding and one reasonable tale. Three of the four are fantasies and the fourth is a historical story but they are all very different from each other and consider different themes with varying characters. This should be a really good read

for those who like to read mystical romances. Originally published for Curled Up With A Good Book, curledup.com. Helen Hancox 20070 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Shinn's part is fine, the others are so so Von Michael Hauser Ok, I am a big Shinn fan. Therefore I tried this compilation, only to find out that Mrs. Shinn is an outstanding author - compared to the others. If you are a Shinn fan, you have to decide if you want to have "all and everything" she has written.

Kurzbeschreibung From wizards to weathermen, everyone has always known the powers of the four elements natural forces that can direct the fates, change destiny, and unite lovers in the most unexpected ways. Now, those magical elements come together in perfect balance, in these stories from four charmed authors In Air find romance...in a breathless retelling of the Cinderella fable from award-winning Sharon Shinn, an amazing writing talent (The Best s). In Fire find adventure...in a parallel dimension of werewolves and love-slaves from USA Today bestselling Rebecca York, a true master (Rave s). In Water find fantasy...and a remarkable universe of magic, demons, and dangerous passion from award-winner Carol Berg. And in Earth...discover the ultimate in profound pleasure from Jean Johnson, a fresh new voice in fantasy romance (Robin D. Owens). There is such a thing as perfect harmony between a man and a woman. Experience it for yourself in... Elemental Magic From Publishers Weekly Shinn (Reader and Raelynx), Johnson (The Master), Berg (Flesh and Spirit) and York (Moon Swept) offer stories of air, fire, water and earth in a delicious smorgasbord of styles. Shinn's Bargain with the Wind is a cautionary reminder about the dangers of making deals with capricious air demons, as exemplified when Lady Charis strikes a bargain to further her ambition of ruling the palatial estate of Grey Moraine. Johnson's Birthright focuses on the earthy desires of twin princesses Kalasa and Arasa, who must determine which was born first in order to decide who will become empress. Berg's Unmasking describes the truth-telling properties of water magic as young Joelle undergoes training to seek out souls possessed by demons. York's Huntress Moon finds virginal slave Zarah, who can communicate via fire, falling in love with her master, Griffin, a werewolf who buys her without knowing she's a spy. Erotic scenes from York and Johnson match the satisfying paranormal content. (Nov.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Kurzbeschreibung From wizards to weathermen, everyone has always known the powers of the four elements natural forces that can direct the fates, change destiny, and unite lovers in the most unexpected ways. Now, those magical elements come together in perfect balance, in these stories from four charmed authors In Air find romance...in a breathless retelling of the Cinderella fable from award-winning Sharon Shinn, an amazing writing talent (The Best s). In Fire find adventure...in a parallel dimension of werewolves and love-slaves from USA Today bestselling Rebecca York, a true master (Rave s). In Water find fantasy...and a remarkable universe of magic, demons, and dangerous passion from award-winner Carol Berg. And in Earth...discover the ultimate in profound pleasure from Jean Johnson, a fresh new voice in fantasy romance (Robin D. Owens). There is such a thing as perfect harmony between a man and a woman. Experience it for yourself in... Elemental Magic