



To Carry The Horn

Karen Myers

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Book 1 of The Hounds of Annwn.

NEW JOB, NEW FAMILY, AND IN TWO WEEKS THE END OF A WORLD HE'S JUST DISCOVERED, IF HE CAN'T RISE TO THE CHALLENGE.

George Talbot Traherne is just doing his job on a fine autumn morning, keeping the hounds together for the huntsman of the Rowanton Hunt in Virginia along the Blue Ridge Mountain. Doesn't pay to get distracted by a white stag in unfamiliar territory, though. Next thing you know, you might find yourself... somewhere else.

The land is the same but not the people. Their huntsman has just been murdered, and George is tapped for the job. It's an emergency — the Wild Hunt is only two weeks away, and if it doesn't happen on schedule, the antlered god Cernunnos will take the realm from its ruler Gwyn ap Nudd and find someone who can mete out justice with the Hounds of Hell in his place.

George throws himself into the task, finding strength in the mission and resources he never knew he had. The more he comes to feel at home, settling into his new responsibilities, the more he wants to stay and make a life for himself. He's finally met someone worth spending his life with, even if she's just a bit older, a mere fifteen hundred years or so.

Can he keep the Wild Hunt on track despite the attempts to thwart it? Will he be accepted by those he wants to defend who view his timely presence and his human blood with suspicion? Above all, what does Cernunnos want of him and how far will he go? Can he survive the attention of a god?

Readers who are familiar with the sources of Arthurian literature such as the Mabinogion will recognize many of the characters, flourishing still in the world we cannot quite reach.

Book details here: <http://perkunaspress.com/wp/books/the...>

To Carry The Horn Details

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Mary B. Grove says

An interesting and very well-written story

I really enjoyed reading this one. Another reviewer commented that s/he didn't like all the time spent on the technicalities of hunting with hounds, but I found it fascinating. I'm not sure I agree with the opinion of hunting and the warrior mindset expressed by George, the main character, but it's surely a valid viewpoint and adds depth to both character and story. His and other's relationships to the hounds and other animals was a high point for me as well, as I've always wished to be able to communicate with other creatures, and Myers really thought through the differences in how each person used and understood their ability, so it wasn't one gift, but multiple variations.

I also liked that this wasn't a simple tale. The politics and personal interactions were complex, and there was an intricate history behind the current events that made the fae characters more than just 'good' or 'bad' guys. Some reviewers have said they found George too impervious, and so hard to warm to, but to me he seemed a strong but gentle man who was doing his best in a difficult and confusing situation. To my mind he was a bit too good a man, as well as too serenely accepting of the bizarre circumstances and setting into which he was thrust, but I'm hoping he'll develop some negative personality traits and become more of a real person as the series continues.

The story got me thinking about the cost of even a limited 'immortality,' along with what gifts and problems longevity offers to both an individual and a society. I envied Angharad her centuries to spend learning different art forms and experimenting with so many ways of pursuing her vision. As a maker, I want that so badly, yet as a very ill person in my mid-fifties, I have little time and energy left to create, which hurts. Myers clearly understands both gift and suffering, and it shows in her writing.

I'm eagerly looking forward to the next book.

Cas Peace says

This book is quite different to the normal run of fantasy novels. First you have the well established European legend of The Wild Hunt, with appearances from the horned god, Cernunnos. Then Ms Myers adds in various figures from Welsh legend, such as Gwyn ap Nudd and his grandfather, Beli Mawr, who are often associated with the Wild Hunt. So far, not so unusual.

But then appears George Talbot Traherne, a human huntsman from Virginia, USA who suddenly finds himself in Annwn, the Otherworld. He walks into the scene of a murder and seemingly coincidentally, ends up leading The Wild Hunt, much to the consternation of many of Annwn's fae inhabitants. Even stranger, George discovers he has family ties to Gwyn ap Nudd.

I confess I wasn't sure at first whether these Celtic legends could possibly be at ease in a setting such as Virginia, but I have to say that Ms Myers does a great job of settling them in. A wonderful cast of characters helps enormously, as do her scenes of George's daily life as Huntsman of The Wild Hunt. I found this book to be a fascinating read. The only reason I haven't given it 5 stars is that I felt there was a touch too much ambient description in places, especially in the first third of the story. Apart from that, To Carry The Horn is a refreshing change in the world of fantasy novels.

Cindy Marsch says

At a Western Pennsylvania event highlighting independent authors, I received a complimentary paperback copy of this novel, given without expectation of a review. Although the story would work well in ebook form, the paperback series has delightful covers and typography.

Karen Myers knows her hounds and hunting! Throughout this fantasy romp that begins with a horse jumping from Virginia right into the world of the fae, I felt confident that every detail of tack and call, of pack behavior and the routine of a hunt, was being revealed to me with expert care. It's no wonder these books are popular among fox hunters (though no foxes are hunted in the alternate world). Myers's fantasy world has long-lived fae who can mate with humans but mostly stay aloof from their human kin lest they fall into heartbreak watching their children and grandchildren and beyond grow old and die while they themselves stay in robust middle age for many centuries. The great advantage of this long life is in a gifted person being able to develop his or her gifts over decades and centuries, and one character, an artist, perfects her craft in many different fields – pottery, painting, textiles.

The appeal of this novel for me – though I usually do not read fantasy – is in that matter-of-fact world that takes magic (reserved for only a few) as a kind of enhanced natural sense. Just as trackers can follow the trail of an animal or person through the wilderness, so a way-finder in To Carry the Horn can sense and access portals into different dimensions of the immediate world or the alternate world. And some are gifted with the ability to communicate with animals in a much more intimate way than are the humans most gifted with animals in our world.

But the decades it takes for an intrigue to develop causes some problems in our real-time experience of the story, and Myers has to catch us up on the backstory in a few spots with characters nursing what we would consider ancient grudges. They get revenge for personal injuries that have sat so long it stretches our credulity to imagine they can still be passions when they wait years and years between steps of a conspiracy. We have to learn of these old quarrels in discussions that slow down the action in our real time (just a few weeks) as our hero, George, discovers the history of this new world and his place in it. Taking us with George into the world is a great way to introduce it, though, and Myers lays hints of things we can expect to see in the following volumes.

Myers's language is clean and pleasant, and her love for the Blue Ridge countryside is evident in the delicious descriptions of the landscape and the joys of a ride through its ridges and forests. This pristine fantasy should delight many readers who enjoy a tale of a pre-industrial rustic utopia that has a few quarrels among its folk – and some of those folk pretty powerful – to keep things interesting.

Ambra says

The MC, George Talbot Traherne, goes out hunting in Virginia and ends up in Annwn (faerieland) in the middle of a crime scene: Iolo, the Wild Hunt's huntsman has been murdered. It also turns out that George is a descendant of Gwyn Annan, lord of Annwn, and said lord asks him to lead the Hunt in Iolo's stead since he seems to be able to command the hounds. On the Wild Hunt's success depends the stability of Gwyn's continued reign. The plot revolves around the murder investigations, George's training as huntsman and a mystery about George's origins (he's got too much magic to be only a far removed descendant of Gwyn). The story was good, it had a lot of potential and I think I will read the next book. BUT something didn't grab me as the books I really love do. George fell a bit flat to me: I didn't feel for him. The story concentrated too much on things I didn't care a lot about and less on things I would have liked to know more about. For example, the training with the hounds took up a lot of the story (yes, I get that the Hunt is what the story was about so it WAS pretty important...) and I wasn't so much interested in the relationships between dogs (not useful note: I don't dislike dogs) while I would have liked to know something more about the land, the other lords, magic and George's relationship with Angharad... that's it, I think: not a bad book but not one that I seriously loved.

David Fernau says

(originally posted on Otherwhere Gazette, including the back and forth with my editor.)

One of the best perks about doing this is that from time to time I get asked to read and review a book that, honestly, I'd never have picked up on my own. That's what happened in this case, and I am very glad it did.

Through the kind meddling of Sarah Hoyt (hi, Sarah!), author Karen Myers sent a copy of both *To Carry The Horn* and its sequel, *The Ways of Winter* to our editor, taskmaster, chief bottle-washer and assigner of reviews, Patrick Richardson (hi, boss!). Pat, in turn, sent them on to me with the veiled hint of dire consequences if I didn't do something about reviewing them. (Okay, maybe I'm exaggerating a little. Or am I?) *Dire threat would suggest I didn't plan on carrying it out. Dire promise perhaps... Ed.*

Anyway, I just finished *To Carry The Horn*, and as I indicated earlier, I'm indebted to Pat, Sarah, Karen, and anyone else whom I may have left out along the line that passed these books on to me.

We start off inside the head of a murderer, just after he or she (carefully not giving any hints here) has committed a murder. We quickly switch to following Virginian foxhunter George Talbot Traherne looking for a lost pack of hunting hounds on his horse. While looking for them, he stumbles through a "way" which leads him to the place and time of the aforementioned murder. The victim is Iolo ap Huw, the Huntsman of Gwyn ap Nudd, and leader of the annual Wild Hunt. With no huntsman, Gwyn questions whether or not the Wild Hunt can take place on the appointed night — Halloween, naturally — and worries that the failure of the Wild Hunt for the first time in his long reign would spell the end of that reign. Probably not surprisingly, George turns out to be a distant relative of Gwyn, so Gwyn invites his kinsman to stay with him for a while, to learn about this branch of his family.

What follows is a quite enjoyable tale of political intrigue, patiently explained to George by various characters in Gwyn's keep and the nearby village, and, of course, murders. George tries to decide if he can or should serve as Huntsman on the upcoming Wild Hunt, while at the same time trying to work out who's

responsible for the murders that have been plaguing the Wild Hunt for many years. Of course, if he does serve as Huntsman, he's likely painting a big target on himself for the murderer, since the motive appears to have been to stop the Wild Hunt. You'll also read a lot of Celtic names drawn from Celtic mythology, and it seems that the storylines are fairly close to what might be called "accepted" Celtic myth, though I'm not an expert on that.

From the technical side — hey, it's my job to look for things like this — there are a few small flaws. Some of the phrasing is a bit clunky, as if a word or two had been left out somewhere or perhaps she went back and changed the wording of a sentence somewhere and didn't read it to make sure it still makes sense (something I do more often than I'd like to admit), and some of the concepts aren't really explained as well as they could be. However, bearing in mind that this is — unless I am mistaken — Mrs. Meyer's first published work, it's easy to forgive her for these little slips.

As I mentioned at the start, this is not the kind of book I'd have been likely to pick up myself. That's nothing against Karen, there are a huge number of books out there, and the ebook revolution has accelerated it, with more independent stuff coming out all the time, so you have to pick and choose what sounds good, and, honestly, the whole "20th or 21st century human transported to a fantasy world" genre is of limited appeal to me for some reason. Well, it was... after *To Carry The Horn*, my mind might be changing on that topic. I'm certainly looking forward to *The Ways of Winter*, and would recommend *To Carry The Horn* to anyone who likes Celtic mythology, mysteries, or stories involving ordinary people taken to fantasy realms.

Betsey says

To Carry The Horn is a story involving the interaction between the fae people of ancient Wales and the human world in the mountains of Virginia, USA. George Talbot is a whipper-in on a fox hunt for the Rowanton Hunt when he is suddenly transported to another world, and he learns that this world is where his ancestors came from. A grandfather who is a fae and lord of Annwn. George soon learns that he has a mental connection to animals and becomes the hunt master for his great-grandfather kennels to replace the hunt master whom was killed right as George was transported to this alternate setting.

With only weeks until the Great Hunt, George learns the ways of running the dogs for the Nos Galen Gaeaf Hunt despite the person or person who are trying to stop the annual hunt for reasons unknown.

He also discovers that he can sense and see the ways (travel portals) that his fae relatives can not.

The story line, setting and characters are wonderful and I learned a lot about fox hunting and the ways of operating a kennel of hunting dogs that I thought was very interesting and detailed. I can almost picture where book number two may go and look forward to reading the continuing story of George and his fae relatives that live in Annwn.

Kathryn Guare says

In writing a fantasy novel incorporating themes she clearly knows and loves, Karen Myers has created a fresh, creative and completely engaging story peopled with a cast of memorable characters. I have no experience or prior knowledge of hunting and hounds, but found myself surprisingly engrossed by this aspect of the story because Myers presents the details with such expertise and fondness. The hunting scenes are as exhilarating as any more conventional "chase" scenes, and while one always expects to encounter magic in

the world of the fae, in this case it is done with such a deft touch that it seems natural and not heavy-handed. The world of Annwn seems like a sort of kinder, gentler Westeros of “Game of Thrones” fame, but just as rife with intrigue, plotting and relatives with dubious motives. By the time I reached some of the climactic scenes I was envisioning what a fantastic movie (or series!) this would make, and I’m hooked for the follow-ups.
