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Alright, I admit it, I was sceptical about this one. I had thought that trying to combine the fantasy and crime genres, with side orders of conspiracy, mythology, and a strong dose of hunting might prove a plotline too far. Happily, I can admit just how wrong I was.

Very wrong!



Karen Myers has managed to combine the strands into a well thought out and beautifully written novel with some interesting twists. Although the main character starts from Virginia, the idea of using Welsh names and stories instead of native American for the other characters has helped to widen the appeal to a more international audience. The style of writing draws the reader in to follow the main character George Talbot Traherne from confused new arrival in another world at the point of a murder, through

discovery of a hidden family past and building relationships with the new people around him, to finding out new skills, to making a huge life-changing decision at the end of the book. One of the major plot twists involves the first appearance of the god Cernunnos, which is handled with great skill and humour.

There is a charming blending of modern technologies into an alternative world where most things are what would be expected from before 1900 and some things do not always work. So, oil lamps are used for lighting, but modern disposable cigarette lighters are used instead of matches. There is no electricity, but indoor plumbing has made its way across the barrier between the worlds. The most important one to the plot is the fact that gunpowder does not work in the alternative world, but all of the variances are beautifully explained and totally logical.

Hunting is an important part of this book, but it should not be considered as a book about hunting that happens to have a story on top; this truly is an accomplished novel that chose to use hunting as the predominate background. Hunting language that may be unfamiliar to non-hunting readers is delicately explained by the mechanism of teaching characters who happen to be novice hunters, giving clear details to readers while avoiding the pitfall of being patronising.

Comparisons with other great sci-fi and fantasy writers are inevitable, and I would not hesitate to put this into the same short-list as David Eddings or Robert Jordan. Some people might find it a difficult book to get into initially, it certainly took me a few chapters because so many plot strands start very early in the novel, but it is well worth persevering as the various threads pull together to make a cohesive story.

To Carry the Horn is available at Amazon.co.uk in both paperback and ebook formats and at many other book retailers worldwide. For a complete list, see: perkunaspress.com/wp/books/the-hounds-

of-annwn/to-carry-the-horn/

Finally I understand that there is a sequel *The Ways of Winter* planned for publication in Spring 2013. That will definitely be on my wish list for next year.

Dr Helen Brook

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