

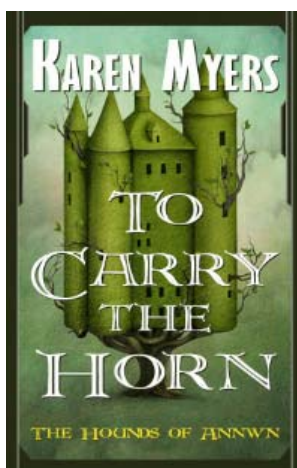


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To Carry the Horn: The Hounds of Annwn

Book Review by [Martha A. Woodham](#)



To Carry the Horn: The Hounds of Annwn by Karen Myers, Perkonas Press, Paperback, 404 pp, \$17.99

It's too easy to sum up *To Carry the Horn: The Hounds of Annwn* as "Harry Potter goes foxhunting," but for adults who grew up on the Harry Potter series—or who used to sneak to read their children's books—author Karen Myers has created a grown-up fantasy for you.

Myers takes readers on a fascinating ride into a parallel world where she weaves figures from Welsh mythology into a well-written tale that involves stag hunting, a huntsman's murder, and a large case of greed and envy. Huntsman George Talbot Traherne, a whipper-in with the Rowanton Hunt in Virginia, is catapulted into the Otherworld when he takes a tumble during a foxhunt on a mysterious estate. When he remounts, George finds himself in the midst of a stag hunt where the huntsman, lolo, has just been murdered.

With the all-important Great Hunt just two weeks away, George agrees to a new job as huntsman for the

Hounds of Annwn in this strange, Mediaevalsque land where everyone seems to have magical powers, even George himself. He discovers that Gwyn ap Nudd, the Prince of Annwn, is his relation and that his parents, who disappeared when he was young, were not quite whom they appeared to be. But more deaths soon place George, at first considered a kinsman and an ally, under suspicion. Was he brought to this world to help Gwyn or to replace him?

Myers, a writer, photographer, and musician who follows the hounds with several Virginia hunts, has populated her Otherworld with a large cast of characters from her very fertile imagination, using Welsh folktales as a springboard for their adventures. Myers' familiarity with hounds and hunting is obvious as she describes the steps George takes to gain the respect of a pack known as the "hounds of hell" and whose presence sends villagers scurrying in fear.

As George trains his inexperienced staff, Myers allows her protagonist to discourse about hunting as a "pure sport," not killing the weak for food but seeking the strongest and most cunning prey. While one of George's powers is the ability to influence the hounds with his mind, he refrains from using it: "To be successful, we must forge an alliance with the hounds that unites and expands all of our senses. That alone is exhilarating, even if the quarry escapes or we find nothing at all ... the hounds don't chase and sometimes kill just because they are a bit hungry but because it's in their nature, and we yearn for that same sense of righteousness for ourselves."

In *To Carry the Horn*, Myers has created a fast-moving tale full of likeable heroes, clever heroines, and shady characters up to no good whose quirky Welsh names will have the reader thinking, "That would make a great name for a horse."

The author promises that this book is the first in *The Hounds of Annwn* series. I can't wait for



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her next, *The Ways of Winter* (due for release in January), but her stories are not just for foxhunters. Here's hoping Myers' fantasy adventures will be a sly way to introduce non-hunters to the thrill of following hounds and broaden the base of support for our sport. That would truly be magical, indeed.

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