

## Book Review

# To Carry the Horn

*First Novel in the Series:*

*The Hounds of Annwn*

**By Karen Myers**

**Reviewed By Aggie Sterrett**

When whipper-in George Talbot Traherne takes a tumble from his horse while foxhunting in the mountains of Virginia, he gets up to find himself in the middle of a stag hunt in a very different Blue Ridge.

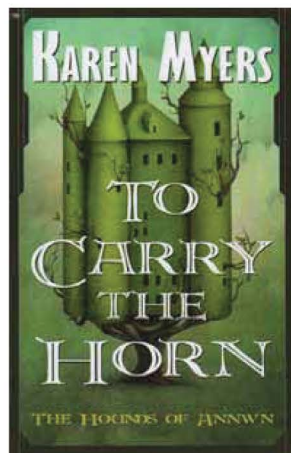
This is how Karen Myers begins her recently released fantasy novel, *To Carry the Horn*, and the twists and the action don't stop until the final page. Based somewhat on the legendary Wild Hunt and Dogs of Hell in Welsh folklore, Myers weaves the modern day George into a parallel world where hunting is a way of life and law.

In this otherworld, George discovers his great-grandfather, Prince of Annwn Gwyn ap Nudd, an immortal whose leadership is being challenged. George's arrival hasn't been a coincidence; it's timed perfectly with the death of the local huntsman. Obviously someone or something is out to sabotage the hunt, and it doesn't take long to realize that George may be the only hope to save not only the hunt, but his great-grandfather's reign as well.

Myers takes us on an exciting and well-thought-out journey through the next several weeks as George accepts Gwyn's invitation to serve as the huntsman for the fabled Great Hunt, the All Hallow's Eve ritual to hunt wrongdoers and mete out punishment in tribute to justice and law. Successful Great Hunts allow another year of peaceful living under the law – failure would be disastrous.

As George delves more deeply into the ways of the immortals, he discovers ancient rivalries and more mysteries to be solved. He also discovers unexplainable powers and heightened senses in himself, including the ability to change his appearance and communicate with hounds and other animals. And as George teaches his novice hunt staff, Myers educates the reader and shares her vast hunt wisdom.

The harried activities preparing for the Wild Hunt leave



George little time to ponder what will happen afterward – will he return to the life to which he was born, now seemingly mundane and unsatisfying, or will an adventure started in a strange land as a favor done for a relative become his new purpose? And will he even have the option to return?

Myers has obviously spent a lot of time developing not only the plot, but also the entire culture and environment of her sometimes quirky otherworld. For instance, the immortals live self-sufficiently in an era a few hundred years ago, but have some items from the current time period like indoor plumbing and cigarette lighters. She explains this by letting the characters occasionally cross over between the human and fae worlds, bringing back modern conveniences. Every nuance is explained – no question is left unanswered at the end of the book.

Myers and her husband David Zincavage have lived in Virginia's hunt country for a decade.

A Yale graduate and computer programmer, she is well known in the local community for her photographs of foxhunting and other equestrian subject matter.

*To Carry the Horn* is the first in Myers' series: *The Hounds of Annwn*. In addition to adults, this imaginative book is totally appropriate for teenagers, and features some principled and independent young characters. The book includes a wonderful index that helps to sort out the Welsh pronunciation and sometimes-

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complicated family relations. The second book in the series, *The Ways of Winter* was released in January. Both books are available in trade paperback and eBook editions through the author's website, [www.perkunaspress.com](http://www.perkunaspress.com), and other online booksellers.

Although I was a bit

skeptical initially about the fantasy/hunting mix, it didn't take long for the writing and the story to totally draw me in. I found this book especially entertaining and creative and I'm very much looking forward to reading more in the series. A special thanks to Karen Myers for taking me out of my usual reading element!

