

BOOK REVIEW

Fae Meets Horse Country

'To Carry The Horn' adds dimension to the Wild Hunt myth.

REVIEWED BY BETSY BURKE PARKER

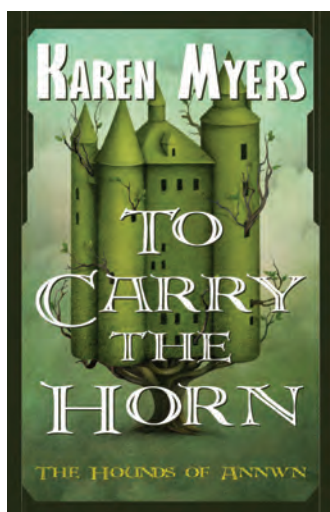
For 3,000 years, the Irish have bred and raised horses, hunted and raced horses, written and sung about horses, and sold horses all over the world, so it's not wonder that Karen Myers' new book, "To Carry the Horn," marries Celtic mythology with a strong dose of Virginia horse country.

When Virginia foxhunter George Talbot Traherne loses track of the Rowanton Hunt's hounds in a dense covert, the last thing he expects is the next jump to teleport him into the fae otherworld.

New author Karen Myers has created in the Traherne character something of a cross between Harry Potter and Melvin Poe — a reluctant postmodern hero thrust into an unseen parallel universe overlapping the modern Piedmont's hunt country with an ancient elfish realm.

"To Carry The Horn," is the first in this Hume, Va.-based writer's "Hounds of Annwn" fantasy series. The classically-educated Myers combines her knowledge of hunting, ancient languages and traditional mythology to create a believable elf-land that exists in the here-and-now, right on top of Virginia's modern magical foxhunting region.

"To Carry The Horn" is a moving exercise in heroic fantasy,



TO CARRY THE HORN

By Karen Myers
\$5.99 E-Book,
\$17.99 Paperback, 427 pages,
Published by Perkunas Press
www.PerkunasPress.com

in which protagonist Traherne is the unlikely champion, a Virginia gentleman and amateur whipper-in to the local Rowanton pack who is thrust into a murder mystery when he's called into the alternate universe by long-lost and previously unknown — unimagined — ancestors living and thriving in an otherworld.

Traherne tumbles into Annwn after a 12-point buck draws him into a deep thicket as he tries to gather the Rowanton pack. Turning his horse,

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as he tries to gather the Rowanton pack. Turning his horse, Mosby, over a fallen log to find the errant hounds, Traherne hits his head on a low-hanging branch, waking up to find himself in the same place, yet another world altogether.

Drawing from Celtic myth, Myers concocts a real-life fairy tale when she draws Traherne into the fairy realm, as he is called into the land of his great-grandfather, Gwyn ap Nudd.

With characters based on easily recognizable hunt country types, Myers says in fact no character in the book is based on a real person. Only Blue Ridge Hunt's Iona Pillion makes an actual cameo appearance, as a pony breeder who is friends with the Annwn huntsman.

Virginia hunt country readers will do well to remember that "To Carry The Horn" is not a contemporary foxhunting novel with some elements of fantasy. Rather, it is a contemporary fantasy book based on hunting with hounds. "To Carry The Horn" is a densely constructed, lavishly imagined adventure. With superior attention to plot, character and realistic scene-setting, the dialogue-rich novel offers intriguing thematic insights while paying homage

to traditional myth without rehashing it.

In the end, the epic story is strongly character-driven, with themes of ego and ambition, heroism and cunning, and above all justice and the opportunity to re-create a life with honor and meaning, something for which the contemporary man yearns.

It's not an easy task to tackle a story of this type and to stick the landing. This work of fiction brings us an intriguing world where death is something that opens a door, and the guidance of otherworldly gods may be needed for mortal justice. And, though written for general local interest and foxhunters as well as fans of the fantasy genre, Myers says that teens with an interest in the fae world and hunting will also enjoy it.

The price is \$5.99 for an E-book, \$17.99 in paperback. "To Carry the Horn" is 427 pages and the first in a three book series. At press time, the second in the Hounds of Annwn series, "The Ways of Winter," had been released, with the third to be completed in late spring. 🍷

Editor's note: An profile of Karen L. Myers appears on ecovertside.net

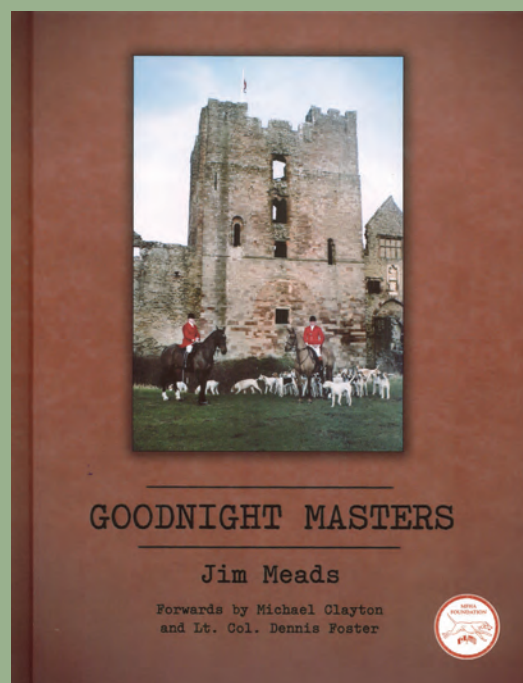
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