



# ANDRE NORTON

Part One

## THE SORCERESS OF THE WITCH WORLD

By A.C. CRISPIN

**H**ow many of you received your very first exposure to science fiction or fantasy when you took an Andre Norton book off the library shelves?

I once asked that question of a packed convention of SF fans, and fully 80% of them raised their hands. Books such as *Witch World*, *Star Rangers* and *Daybreak 2250 A.D.* have been classics in the field for decades. Andre Norton's extensive career has spanned 50 years and many genres: science fiction and fantasy, of course, but also spy intrigues, historical adventures, romantic suspense and even a murder mystery!

She has received numerous awards for lifetime achievement in the field: the Gray Mouser (the actual award is a gray Mouser mounted on a board), the Lensman Award, the Balrog, the Gandalf (the fantasy version of the Hugo) and the Nebula Grandmaster. In several cases, she was the first woman to be given such an award.

Following World War II, Norton was also decorated by the government of the Netherlands, for several of her Sword stories portraying the heroic adventures and intrigues of the Dutch resistance.

Andre Norton was born Alice Mary Norton in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1912. Even as a small child, she loved stories, and she became an early and voracious reader. The Uncle Wiggly and the Oz books were favorites, and help to explain her love for fantasy and science fiction. She also grew up with an enduring love of and regard for animals, as anyone who has read her books can testify. Norton began writing stories "strictly for my own amusement" when she was about eight years old.

After graduating from Collingwood High School in Cleveland, she attended college briefly, but the Depression made it necessary for her to earn a living, so she spent the next



Among her beloved cats, this grandmaster of SF & fantasy recalls the storytelling spells that have made her legend.

Sorceress Art: Jeff Jones/Ace Books

18 years working as a children's librarian, while writing fiction part-time.

In the years since 1950, Andre Norton has become one of science fiction and fantasy's premier authors, with more than 120 published titles, and millions of books sold.

Norton calls her Florida home "Avalon," and a replica of the sword Excalibur hangs above her mantle. It's a lovely and distinctive house, inhabited by Norton and multitudes of cats—cat sculptures, paintings, ceramics—in addition to real felines.

A.C. CRISPIN has written two stories for Andre Norton's *Tales of the Witch World*, and collaborated with Norton on a novel, *Gryphon's Eyrie* (Tor). They are currently working on another, *Songsmith*. Crispin is also the author of two *Pocket-Books* Star Trek volumes, *Yesterday's Son* and *Time for Yesterday*. *Starbridge*, the first book in Crispin's *Starbridge SF* series, will be released in September by Ace. Her essay on writing tie-in novels and novelizations appeared in *STARLOG* #83.



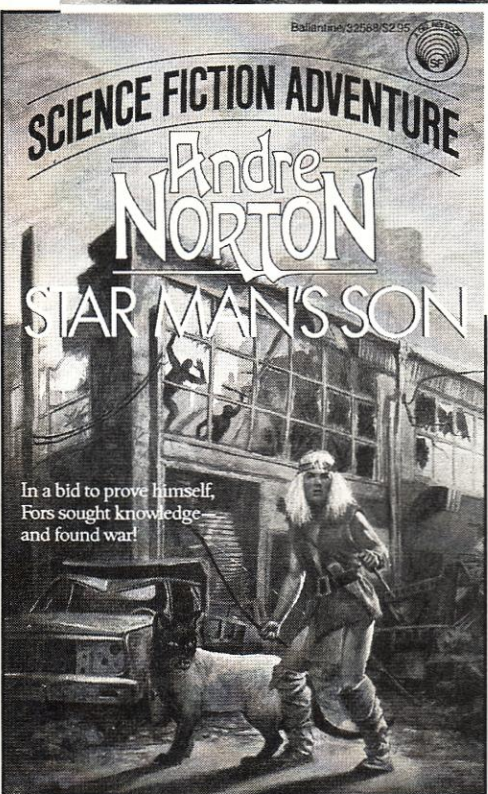
Author of  
the best-selling  
Witch World books

# RALESTONE LUCK

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Ralestone Luck can restore  
the family fortunes...

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In a bid to prove himself,  
Fors sought knowledge  
and found war!

**Star Man's Son** was her first  
full-length SF book, published in 1952.

**STARLOG:** Were you surprised when *Life* magazine declared you to be the *grand dame* of science fiction?

**ANDRE NORTON:** (*Laughs.*) Of course! It was a great honor. Their photographer wanted to take an unusual picture of me for that feature, so I had to sit perfectly still for a long time by candlelight, with one of my cats in my arms, and a mirror on the table

before me. I was in my library, surrounded by books. I think the idea was for me to look rather mysterious and arcane.

**STARLOG:** Did you also know that STARLOG named you as one of the 100 Most Important People in Science Fiction and Fantasy?

**NORTON:** Yes, STARLOG sent me a copy of that issue. I was very pleased and grateful to find my name listed along with people like H.G. Wells and Jules Verne.

**STARLOG:** How many books have you had published?

**NORTON:** I counted them up, because everyone always asks. There are 106 solo novels, 12 anthologies I've edited, and another 12 books written in collaboration with other writers—124.

**STARLOG:** With more on the way.

**NORTON:** Oh, yes. Currently, I'm involved in at least seven or eight other book projects, either alone, or with collaborators. And there are several books that I've turned in that haven't been released yet by the publisher.

**STARLOG:** That's truly an impressive body of work. When did you begin writing? What was your first book?

**NORTON:** I wrote my first book, *Ralestone*

*Ralestone Luck* was Norton's first novel, written in high school.

*Luck*, when I was still in high school, but that was actually the *second* one I sold. My first published novel was *The Prince Commands*, which was an adventure story in the tradition of Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda*. It was about a young man who travels to a small fictional country in Europe, and finds adventure there, helping the rightful heir regain his throne. It was published in 1934, when those kinds of stories were very popular. Tor recently re-released it.

**STARLOG:** Did you always want to be a writer?

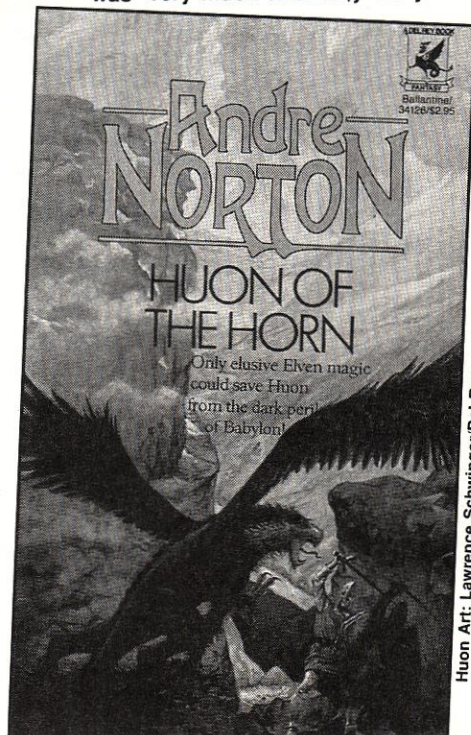
**NORTON:** No, in the beginning, my ambition was to be a history teacher. I never thought I would be able to support myself with my writing, so in the early years, I would publish a book every couple of years or so. It wasn't until my health failed and I wasn't able to continue working outside my home as a librarian that I really sat down to see if I could support myself—and my elderly parents—as a writer.

Before circumstances forced me into it, I didn't believe it would be possible to make a decent living from my writing. Back when I first began writing, authors made very little for a book—though the dollar went much farther in those days, too! A standard advance was only a few hundred dollars. (*Laughs.*) I remember that one year, my total income from writing was 37 cents!

**STARLOG:** Why did you use the name "Andre?"

**NORTON:** Because, when I first began writing, I knew that my audience would be mostly teenaged boys, and I believed that using a "masculine" name—actually, "Andre" without the accent is the *feminine* version of the name, though not many people seem to know that—anyway, I believed

*Huon of the Horn*, a fairy tale retold,  
was "very much a fantasy story."



Only elusive Elven magic  
could save Huon  
from the dark perils  
of Babylon!

Huon Art: Lawrence Schwinger/Del Rey



doing so would be the right choice for the audience I was writing to please. Many other women authors reached the same conclusion—Leigh Brackett and C.L. Moore.

So, for years, most people thought I was a man. But these days, it doesn't seem to matter whether you're a man or a woman, just how well you can tell a story, which is the way it *should* be. That's how I like to think of myself... as a storyteller.

**STARLOG:** In those early years, did you write any science-fiction or fantasy novels?

**NORTON:** Not any novels, no. I did write some short stories that I sold to pulp magazines or short story collections. You see, in the years before 1950, there was virtually *no* market for book-length science fiction or fantasy.

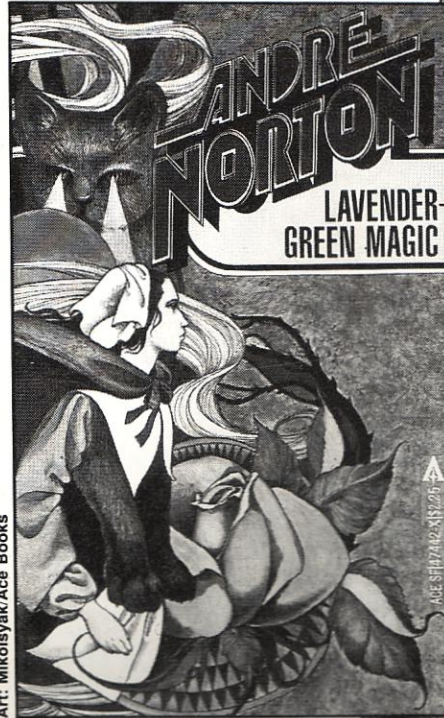
**STARLOG:** So, what kind of books did you write?

**NORTON:** I wrote what were then called "adventure stories." These books were set in various locations and times, for example, the *Sword* books [*At Sword's Points*, *The Sword is Drawn* and *Sword in Sheath*, all recently reissued by Unicorn Star Press] were about espionage and intrigue in the Netherlands and Dutch West Indies during and just after World War II.

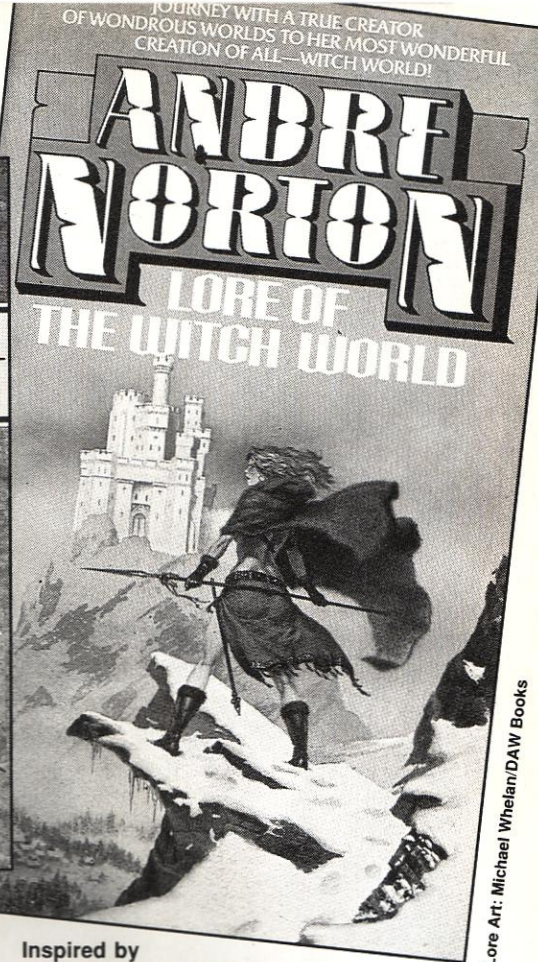
Other books were set during and after the Civil War [*Ride Proud*, *Rebel!* and *Rebel Spurs*]. *Follow the Drum* was an adventure/romance novel set in England and the American colonies during the 17th century. Altogether, I wrote over a dozen adventure books. I also wrote a mystery, *Murders for Sale*.

**STARLOG:** But all along, you were interested in writing fantasy and science fiction. What finally made that possible?

"I base all my spells on the traditional laws of magic," says Norton.



Art: Mikolajak/Ace Books



Lore Art: Michael Whelan/DAW Books

**NORTON:** Yes, I loved reading and writing stories about the fantastic, and in 1949, I was asked to edit a science-fiction anthology for World Publishing. It was called *Bullard of the Space Patrol*, and over the next several years, I did three more for them: [*Space Pioneers*, *Space Service* and *Space Police*].

I enjoyed doing that first book so much that my editor, Lillian Zevin, who was the wife of the man who owned World Publishing, suggested that I try a full-length science-fiction book of my own. I did, and *Star Man's Son* [published in paperback as *Daybreak, 2250 A.D.*] was released in 1952. Another book issued about that time was a retelling of a fairy tale, *Huon of the Horn*, which is very much a fantasy story. *Daybreak, 2250 A.D.* sold very well [the book passed the million-copy mark over a decade ago], which came as a great surprise to the publishers. So then, they wanted more science fiction, and by the early '60s, they were also willing to publish fantasy.

**STARLOG:** You certainly don't have to worry about finding publishers these days!

**NORTON:** No, and these days I mostly do fantasy, which has always been my first love. Even in my science fiction, I was always careful to keep my people away from "hardware" as much as I could—out of the spaceship and onto the planet as fast as possible, so to speak.

**STARLOG:** That format has always worked very well for you. But why the aversion to "hardware" in your science fiction?

**NORTON:** I am *not* a machine-oriented person, as anyone who has read my books can tell. I don't like technology, and I think it has, in many cases, done more harm to our world than good. I don't write on a computer, and I only switched to an electric

**Inspired by medieval history, Norton created Witchworld.**

typewriter when using a manual machine made my fingers too stiff.

And, frankly, I don't know very much about the technical aspects of science, so I was always afraid I would make some kind of mistake and not realize it, but my readers would. So, I got in the habit of landing my people on some planet, then plunging them right into an adventure. I do love creating alien worlds.

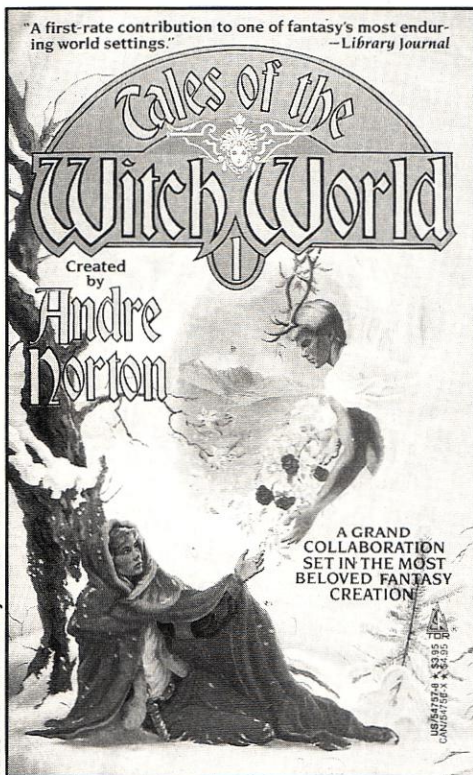
**STARLOG:** Worlds such as your famous *Witch World* became the seminal novel for one of the genre's most popular series. How many *Witch World* books are there currently?

**NORTON:** There are 18 now, with more to come in the near future, when the *Chronicles of Lornt* will be released by Tor. At the moment, you could say that the *Chronicles* are my pet project. I'm extremely excited about the stories that will be contained in those three volumes—all of them excellent stories, novels that show the *Witch World* as a growing, evolving place.

**STARLOG:** How did you get the idea for the original *Witch World*?

**NORTON:** The story developed from some material I was reading about the Norman invasion—how some knights didn't go back to England, but instead stayed in what they called "Outramer," which was Palestine, and carved out small principalities for themselves there. Much as my *Witch World* hero, Simon Tregarth, did, after he used the *Seige Perilous* to transport himself to *Witch World* in order to escape people in our world who were trying to kill him.

**STARLOG:** So, *Witch World* sprang partly



Tales Art: Victoria Posner/Tor Books

"In *Tales of the Witch World*, I've allowed other authors to write their own vision of *Witchworld*," Norton explains.



# ANDRE NORTON GARAN THE ETERNAL

AN EPIC ADVENTURE OF TIME  
AND THE STARS



Garan Art: Jack Gaughan/DAW Books

from medieval history?

**NORTON:** Yes, and legend. I got the idea of using the Siege Perilous as a means to transport my hero after I read about it in a book about King Arthur. It seems that the Siege Perilous was a stone that several of Arthur's knights sat on, and promptly disappeared! It was reputed to have the power to judge people and transport them to the world where they truly belonged. Only Galahad was able to sit on it and remain in our world.

The first part of *Witch World* that I actually put on paper was the initial portion of the "Venture of Verlaine," which was about the wrecker people, and the girl Loyse, who was to be married off by axe-marriage—a proxy marriage—to a man she had never seen. Then, I hooked that up with Simon's story, and it all just kept going from there.

You might also be interested to know that the character of Koris of Gorm was actually based on a real man who lived during the time of the Hundred Years War.

**STARLOG:** When you wrote the original novel, *Witch World*, did you foresee a series developing from it?

**NORTON:** No, not at all. I've always enjoyed writing sequels of books, because any story I write only recounts just a few of the important events in a character's life, and to me, those people definitely possess both a past and a future. That means that more stories remain to be told about a given character, and I enjoy revisiting characters I've already created.

But at the time I wrote *Witch World*, I had no idea that people would want more *Witch World* stories, or that it would develop into a series.

**STARLOG:** Are you still enjoying the series after so many books?

**NORTON:** Yes, although as I get older, writing becomes more work. It's difficult to sit in one place for a long time. So, it's a relief to me to know that *Witch World* is likely to keep going, even when I won't be writing full-time anymore.

Using the masculine-like name "Andre", Norton notes, once seemed like a good way to appeal to a primarily teen male audience.

That's because now there are other writers I've asked to write *Witch World* stories. In the *Tales of the Witch World* (Volumes 1-4), I've allowed other fantasy and science-fiction authors to write their own vision of *Witch World*, and it has been tremendous fun for me to see what stories other people find to tell in a universe I created—people like Judith Tarr, Ardath Mayhar, Elizabeth Scarborough, Pauline Griffin, Robert Bloch and C.J. Cherryh.

**STARLOG:** Are most of the stories in the *Tales* volumes take-offs or sequels to stories in your *Witch World* books?

**NORTON:** Some of them are, yes. But many stories cover territory I never explored—for example, I never did very much with the Sulcar society, or that of the Falconers, but several of the *Tales* stories bring to light some very interesting things about them. Falconers seem to be very popular for inspiring stories from other writers! There also will be several excellent stories about the Falconers in the three *Chronicles of Lormt* books.

These are books which I'm writing with four other fantasy writers: Pauline Griffin, Patricia Mathews, Sasha Miller and Mary Schaub. There will be three books, each of which will contain two complete novels, plus there will be the ongoing story of the "Chronicler," a man named Duratan.

In the first book, I've written a story called "The Port of Dead Ships," which brings back Simon Tregarth and his family to investigate a very strange phenomenon in Estcarp's seas, a phenomenon that only Simon can understand, because he originally came from our Earth. The other story in that volume will be Pauline Griffin's "Sea Keep," which is about the Falconers trying to rebuild their way of life after the witches of Estcarp "Turned"—that is, tumbled about—the mountains on their border to wipe out an invading army. Since the Falconers' home, their "Eyrie," was located in those mountains, it was totally destroyed, though they were warned in time to evacuate before the Turning.

The second "Chronicles" volume will feature Mary Schaub's "Exile," and Pauline's sequel to "Sea Keep," "Falcon Hope." Mary's story is about a woman who is seeking help for her aunt, one of the witches rendered nearly catatonic, burned out by channeling the Power to Turn the mountains and destroy the invaders from Karsten. Nolar, the heroine, goes to Lormt and uncovers an ancient scroll that tells of a mysterious healing stone that might save her aunt, but evil forces are also struggling to possess it.

The third volume in the *Chronicles of Lormt* will contain Pat Mathews' "We, the Women" and Sasha Miller's "Falconer's Child," which are both about the Falconers, though they are very different stories. Pat's story is about a village of Falconer women,

(continued on page 52)



# Norton

(continued from page 36)

and what happens to one of these women after the Turning sets her free from her Falconer master. Sasha Miller's story is a sequel to the one she did for *Tales of the Witch World*, which was entitled "To Re-Build the Eyrie," about a Falconer who kidnaps a young woman, then falls in love with her. It was an excellent story, and the sequel is equally good.

**STARLOG:** Why are you calling these books the *Chronicles of Lormt*?

**NORTON:** Witch World readers will recognize the name of Lormt as being an ancient place of records in Estcarp, where the Old Race recorded—then forgot—much of the lore and wisdom of their people. I've invented the Chronicler, Duratan, a man of the Old Race who determines to bring the history of his people up to date by writing down stories from the Time of the Turning and afterwards. Duratan is an ex-Borderer soldier who was left crippled by the war, so he retired to Lormt, and there began investigating old records.

Duratan's story will be woven throughout the three volumes, and will form a chronicle all its own, by the time the third book ends. So, all told, there will be seven complete stories in the three books!

**STARLOG:** When can Witch World fans look for the *Chronicles of Lormt* on bookstore shelves?

**NORTON:** The first one will be out sometime in early 1990, I believe, and the others haven't been formally scheduled yet. But all the books have been written, and turned in to Tor Books, which will be publishing the *Chronicles*.

**STARLOG:** You're scheduled to be the Guest of Honor at this year's 1989 World Science Fiction Convention, to be held in Boston over Labor Day.

**NORTON:** Yes, I am. I don't attend many conventions because of my health. But lately I've been able to attend a few here and there, and, health permitting, I will be at Noreascon Three. There's also something else you should know. This year, at the World Science Fiction Convention, there will be a special volume published, featuring stories by all of the Grandmasters. It was my idea to do that, and Tor Books and the Noreascon committee are publishing it as a joint venture. It will be called *In the Grand Manner*, and each Grandmaster has chosen their favorite short story to be included.

**STARLOG:** And you chose?

**NORTON:** I chose "The toads of Grimmerdale," a story that appeared in a volume of my short stories, *Lore of the Witch World*.

**STARLOG:** What World Con projects do you have coming out?

**NORTON:** Tor will be releasing *Imperial Lady* which I wrote with Susan Schwartz just in time for that convention. I'll be doing a few program events, and I plan to participate in a couple of autographings, so I can meet some of my readers and sign their books. I'm certainly looking forward to it!

**TO BE CONTINUED**