

REVIEWS by Gary Zachrich

DARK PIPER by Andre Norton. Ace 60¢



A very good tale of the hardships suffered on an outlying planet when a widespread civilization breaks up due to an exhausting war.

Loss of contact with the central government and lack of interplanetary trade is followed by piratical remnants of some human expeditionary force whose home planet has been destroyed. The only survivors are a group of young people who had taken refuge in a series of underground caves. They fight for survival against disease, some remaining invaders and finally the mutated animals, results of experiments, who now roam the world.

Hard for me to say this, Norton being my favorite author for several reasons, but this is a little less than her average high quality. I will rate it a low class A. Notice, if you please, that this still places it high on my reading list. It is a good book to read. And a nice Gaughan cover too.

NOW. On every one of her books, they seem to want to include some review quote from someplace that includes words like 'very good for kiddies as well as adults' 'juvenile reading that will appeal to oldsters too' or some such claptrap.

True it is that she does use young people for her central characters. Also true that they do not spend time boozing and wenching as some others do. Like Leiber's S. & S. duo. Let's face it. Very young people do not hang around in bars. Her approach is refreshing, for I happen to believe that adventures must fall to other than twenty eight year old, six foot two, one eighty and high IQed people. On top of that, I recall when I was one of them juveniles and ate up all the BEMs, boozers, lily white pulp heroes, and hard core science fiction. I even read some war novels too, cause sometimes they described the sex act in graphic detail.

One thing remains true. A good story is a good story, whether it be Sam Clemens (and I like him too) or Asimov. So why don't they describe her work as such and add a little note. 'Andre Norton, wonderful story teller, master of suspense and adventure, is blessed with the ability to produce works that even young people are consistently able to read and enjoy.'

WORLDS OF THE WALL by C.C. MacAPP. Avon 75¢

A portion of this appeared in FANTASTIC, 1964, which I thought was very good. I sometimes pass up expanded versions and read this one by accident. I was very glad I did. MacAPP must have enjoyed this one as it was written. The continuity is very good throughout the heart of the book, it's full of action and the characters are top notch. Fantasy Sword & Sorcery, (a little time twistin' too).

From a critical standpoint, it suffers from expansion in the introductory chapter. Get this. In order to place Zeke Boliver of Earth in other circumstances he is swished out in null space, becomes lost and is talked down to a planet shaped like half of a breakfast grapefruit because someone down dere calls him by name on the radio. But this is only to get him started and might not be as bad as I think. From then on I couldn't lay it down.

Except I almost got disgusted on the last page when I thought he was going to do one of those time paradox things that I can't stand, but it turned out to be some twisted time continua. Which is ok.

Class A.

