

# A dense but rewarding Witch World finale

*Free*

## The Warding of Witch World

By Andre Norton  
Warner, 560 pp., \$22.95

## Book Review

By Tish Wells  
USA TODAY

There is only one Andre Norton.

Over the past 30 years, Norton (a.k.a. Alice Mary) has inspired generations of readers with fascinating action-adventure fiction.

Starting in the years when most sci-fi writers were male, she built her reputation as a young-adult writer, despite the intricacies of her novels, their galactic scope and her

penchant for exploring such issues as feminism and Native American culture.

Then, in 1963, she created Witch World, a fantasy universe that spawned her popular series, *Secrets of the Witch World*.

Now, 33 years later, Norton concludes the series with *The Warding of Witch World*, in which she offers her major characters (ex-Earthman Si-

mon Tregarth, his wife, Jaelithe, and their offspring Kemoc, Kyllan and Kaththea) their greatest challenge: the closing of the gates that let strangers into their world.

In *Warding*, Norton uses characters created by other co-

authors in the series, Mary Schaub and Lyn McConchie, to set up the conflict against the Dark Mages and the gates. This makes for a crowded story line.

Unfortunately, this book lacks background for a casual reader, who soon will be lost in the confusing plethora of

names and places.

By the end of *Warding*, the gates have been sealed, but the powers within Witch World are still alive. The houses of Tregarth, Gryphon, Reeth and Gorm will have to keep up the battle against the Dark.

Norton fans can only hope the author will change her mind about ending the series, so readers can enjoy still more of these tantalizing tales

