

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning I intended to make *Witch World* live for only one book. However, once that was finished I was plagued by more and more questions that arose in my own mind about the past, present and future of that world. Apparently I was not the only one who felt that more must be known, for I began to receive letters from readers demanding "what happened next?"

The original seed of the whole story was a fragment I had set down as an incident to be the beginning of a historical novel about the Crusaders in Outremer, those who never returned to Europe but remained to carve out small holdings of their own in the Middle East. To build upon such an idea gave me reason to research histories of that time and learn more and more about the whole fabric of society for the period. This knowledge was wedded to folklore, ballads, (*Warlock of the Witch World* is based on *Childe Roland*) and the occult.

Out of this mixture—which was a heady one—there spurted more and more adventures for the people who had taken on a life of their own by the end of the second book. A number of the tales came straight from very old folktale sources—while, oddly enough, the occult material was found mainly in modern accounts of Wicca, herbs, color magic, and the like.

High Hallack was born out of *Year of the Unicorn*—and the root of that was *Beauty and the Beast*. Then the inhabitants of the Dales kept on demanding places in narratives.

Now I had two continents, as well as several hundred years of history, to spread before readers.

When *Tales of the Witch World* was conceived I was most eager to see what other writers would wish to add to that history. Undoubtedly they would create parts of the world which so far had been blind—white wastes, unknown to me. This is just what happened. New lights on old history flashed into life. We had Falconers speaking up for themselves, weres and ladies, warriors and dangerous spells, coming into being in both High Hallack and Estcarp. I was delighted to gather all these new insights upon a world I had cherished for so long. Thus I am more than pleased to be able to pass along to others this richly tapestried and expanded Witch World.

—Andre Norton