

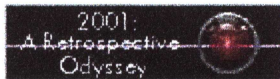
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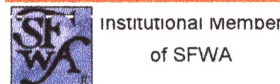


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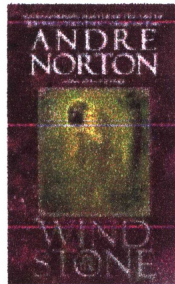
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Book Review: *Wind in the Stone* by Andre Norton

by [Amy Harlib](#)



The grand dame of fantastic fiction, prolific for 67+ years, losing none of her 'chops,' produces another excellent fantasy novel -- an imaginative variation on one of her favorite themes: the dualistic battle of light against darkness with both sides aided by natural and magical forces---but here, the characters, especially the women and the antagonist, are better developed and portrayed with more realism than ever before. Norton was never one to rest on her laurels! *Wind in the Stone* opens by focusing on the antihero and his motivations.

Irasmus, lastborn son of minor nobility, picked-on by his older brothers and neglected by his parents, sent away to apprentice at Valarian, the Place of Learning, channels his anger and hate into ambition to pursue forbidden knowledge, tempted by the power to be attained by mastery of Dark Sorcery. Fooling his teachers into thinking him ignorant and harmless, Irasmus plunders their powerful cache of magical lore with which he hopes to reawaken and control the Dark of Chaos, an evil the Covenant of Light kept in check for generations. Then, summoning a squad of gobbes---hideous demons---Irasmus departs and takes up residence in the Tower in Stymer in the Valley where a long ago battle between the Dark and the Light was fought, resulting in the Covenant that binds all magical forces, including the Wind and its manifestation, Theeossa, the Forest Lady, to non-interference.

Irasmus uses his enslaved gobbes to in turn enslave the people of the Valley who include the villagers of Firthdun, unique in their adherence to the old ways, nurturing a lingering strain of Old Blood---ability to commune with the Wind. To consolidate his conquest, Irasmus rapes, (in a gut-wrenching scene), Sulema, a woman gifted with a bit of 'talent,' intending to use her resulting magic-capable son as an aid in his plans and as a successor.

Sulema's subsequent birth proves fatal, but produces Fogar---who Irasmus grabs ---and then, unknown to the sorcerer-sire, a twin daughter Falice, sent into the forest to be fostered by the sapient nonhuman Sasqua, (think gentle Sasquatches ferocious when roused), and the Wind.

The Mages, laboring to undo the damage unwittingly wrought, enlist the aid of Theeossa and the children of her forest to effect some subtle and judicious interventions that enable Fogar to resist his master's, (father's), attempts to enslave him. Finally, while Irasmus makes preparations to summon a horrific Great one, Vastos, hoping for an alliance, the mages, Fogar, Fogar's magic-touched cousin Cerlyn, and Falice unite with the Wind to attempt to oppose him.

Written in Norton's inimitable style and with her unique and skillful storytelling mastery, imaginatively conceived and set in a fully realized medieval-type world, *Wind in the Stone* advances its plot by relating it from a variety of viewpoints. This makes the characters and their setting emerge in colorful



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...temples. The names and characters and their setting emerge in context, compelling detail while building to the inevitable showdown between the forces of dark and light. The final confrontation, stunningly vivid, richly satisfying with its magical derring-do culminates in a delicious macabre ironic twist. This fantasy novel represents Norton in top form---rendering a classic struggle between good and evil with a refreshing cast of interesting characters, emotionally gripping situations, intriguing background and deftly crafted wordsmithing. May Norton's health be sustained that she may in turn sustain her legions of readers with more highly entertaining yarns like this one!

[Amy Harlib](#), an avid lifelong reader of SF & F literature, retired with plenty of time to indulge in her passion. She lives in NYC.

[Send us your review of Wind in the Stone](#)

Links:

[Wind in the Stone](#) is available from Amazon.com.

[Andre Norton's Official Website](#) - An extensive look at the life and works of The Lady.

[High Hallack](#) - Read about Ms. Norton's genre research library.

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