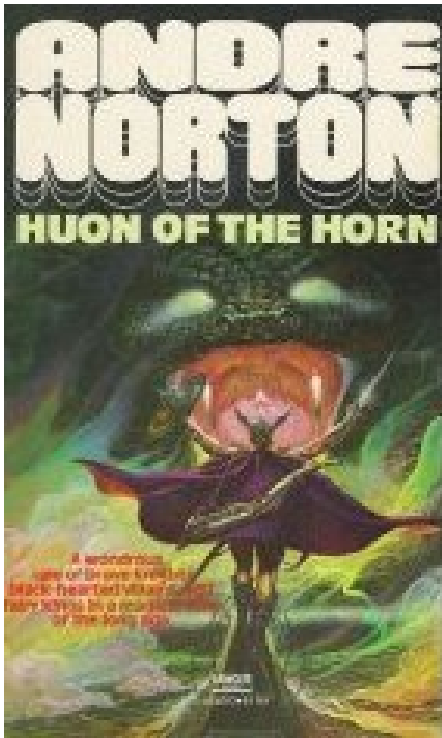




Huon of the Horn

Andre Norton

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Huon of the Horn Andre Norton

Huon, Duke of Bordeaux, never suspected that the evil Earl Amaury was busily plotting his downfall. So the young duke fell easily into Amaury's trap – tricked into slaying the Emperor Charlemagne's only son. The earl fed Charlemagne's wrath with lies, and the bewildered Huon found himself exiled from France. His only chance for redemption lay in the completion of four impossible tasks in the land of the deadly Saracens – a quest doomed to failure.

Huon now faced danger that would still the heart of the stoutest knight. First he had to win the aid of Oberon, King of the Elves. Only then could he hope to survive the dark peril of Babylon to take the greatest prize of all – beautiful Claramonde, daughter to the Emir!

But Amaury's deceit was still at work in Charlemagne's heart. Even if Huon could overcome all the hosts of Babylon, his greatest battle would still await...

Huon of the Horn Details

Date : Published October 12th 1980 by Fawcett Crest (first published September 1951)

ISBN : 9780449243404

Author : Andre Norton

Format : Mass Market Paperback 192 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy, Historical, Historical Fiction

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Doc says

I enjoy this sort of knightly story, couched in that wonderful Victorian faux old English. Huon, duke of Bordeau, is just trying to mind his own business when Charlemagne sends a summons to come swear fealty.

A serious mishap occurs during Huon's trip, and then it's just one bad thing after another. This is an enjoyable departure from sci fi for Andre Norton.

Erik Graff says

I read this because when I was in elementary school I knew Andre Norton to be a science fiction writer and I read all the science fiction I could get my hands on. This, however, wasn't science fiction, nor was it really by Norton. It was her modern translation of a sixteenth century fantasy and it, with its reference to Charlemagne and Oberon, was way over my head at the time. Reading it may have substantially contributed to an early distaste for Andre Norton.

Bryn Hammond says

I found discussion of this romance interesting in Trade and Romance, where it figures for its Asian wanderings, but I'm afraid I'm bored by the romance itself. In the future I might get hold of the Early English Texts edition with the Lord Berners translation of 1534, of which this is an adaptation. Not that I want to doubt Andre Norton, and bravo to her for spending her pen on an obscure old romance.

Notable also for the friendship between Huon and Oberon, King of the Fairies.

Jim Collett says

This is an old classic that reads like some long-ago text. While the fantastic shifts of fortune are almost laughable at times, it is still fun to read classic high fantasy. There is also an interesting mix of Christianity and magic, especially Faerie, two things which usually do not so comfortably co-exist.

Suzannah says

I re-read this retelling of the medieval legend of Huon of Bordeaux--in its original form a thirteenth-century chanson de geste adding to the Matter of France--as a chaser to *The Song of Roland*. It was almost as much fun as I remember, and I have so many thoughts about it that I've decided to write a more in-depth review on my blog at some future date!

Morris Nelms says

This was my introduction to Andre Norton back in Junior High School. Living in the small town of Frederick, OK, I quickly learned that "there is no frigate like a book" and this one is an excellent introduction to Medieval literature. Norton edits and translates. She stays out of the way of the original story brilliantly. This does not read or feel like any of her other work, because here she is restoring (if you will) a very old classic and bringing it to a young modern reader. It worked for me. I've been a fan of Andre Norton ever since.

If you like King Arthur, Roland, or any of the other stories of knights errant then you'll find plenty to enjoy here. It would be interesting to read this with Don Quixote, since this is the type of literature Cervantes was satirizing in his novel.

Valerie says

Norton states in the preface that her version is 'based on' an english translation of a tale from the era of Charlemagne. It's a mistake to read 'based on' as indicating a literal copy, with only slight updates as to language.

This is classic Norton, and (as is true for many of her stories) uses byways and sidelines of history as we wuz taught it as a springboard into her own stories. From the start it assumes a knowledge of things like the Song of Roland, which I, for one, don't have. Because it's adapted from a story meant to be recited orally, there's a lot of redundancy.

If I have problems with the violence in Norton's books, this is a good example of where she got it from. There's scarcely a page on which someone isn't killed off, or at least injured. Some of the elements are complete non sequiturs. For example, it's perhaps understandable that the hero kills griffins who are trying to eat him--but why does he cut off one of the griffin's legs, and carry it with him? So far as I can tell, it's never used for anything.

D. says

Andre Norton continues working to find her voice in this intriguing retelling of a 16th century legend. I suppose this technically counts as a fantasy, since it has Fairies and Gods, etc., but it's really more of a traditional Romance, with knights, quests, maidens, and lots of daring-do.

Norton's choice to retell the legend in a quasi-medieval style is a clever one, and it works well. She manages to retain the overall "flavor" of the story, while still making it accessible to modern readers. She also maintains the rapid-fire pacing of the original story, which is a nice change from today's multi-volume bloated fantasy epics. (Seriously, ten pages of this novel could be expanded into a trilogy by some contemporary authors!)

There are guest stars aplenty: Roland, Charlemagne, King Arthur, and Oberon all appear at some point in the narrative!

Well worth seeking out for the retelling of a mostly-forgotten story, and for Norton's compelling approach to the material. It may feel a bit "old-fashioned: to some contemporary readers, but I thought it was great fun.

Timothy Boyd says

Good Fantasy Novel, Nice quick read. Recommended

Shari Scott says

Being fairly new to the Norton enthusiasm, I started from her earliest that we had. This is not a typical Norton story, it is a linguistically updated version of a fable from the 1500's. Since I am a fan of Arthurian literature, it was great fun for me to read a similar tale from France. However, if you are looking for her fantasy/science fiction this is not for you.

mark monday says

rather pretty, rather simple. unfortunately each time i picked this up i found myself on the first train to snoozeville. i wanted to like it so much more, but perhaps norton was intimidated by the original subject material, because the novel never really came alive for me.

still, I do have to say that this was a particularly pleasant book to fall asleep to in the park. several nice naps occurred over the course of several nice days. which reminds me, San Francisco weather sure has been pleasant lately. yay, global warming?

Ronald Wilcox says

I love Norton's later works so have sought out a lot of her early works. This one is a fantasy telling of Huon, the Duke of Bordeaux in France, and his adventures while Charlemagne was emperor, including meeting of King Oberon of Elfland as well as various giants and demons. Told in an Olde English manner, it has the highlights but lacks a sense of depth or detail.

Doris says

This retelling of a tale of the court and hangers-on of the legendary King Charlemagne is worth rereading. It deals with magic, good and evil, with entities from myth and legend (Fairy King Oberon and his wife.

Adam McPhee says

Two adventures adapted from the Huon de Bordeaux, a late chanson de geste with elements from the new romance genre. It starts off as a standard chanson: a counsellor of Charlemagne swears revenge on the late Duke Sevin by going after his sons Huon the Duke of Bourdeaux, and Gerame, by manipulating the king's son and heir into being killed by Huon. It's actually fairly clever given the genre we're talking about. Then it veers off into fantasy: as penance Huon has to travel to the Far East to do brave deeds, but gets lost and ends up in Fairy Land. Here he befriends Auberon, a fairy/elf/dwarf and king of Fairy Land (he was born a human but was blessed and cursed by fairies, and so he never grows to be an adult etc etc). Huon is given a magical horn that can summon Auberon and 10,000 troops in a moment, and there are more adventures and more magic.

The second adventure is much the same: Huon's Bordeaux castle comes under attack by the new King Louis, and he sets off to the Far East for help. He fights a tusked giant and there's a castle that seems to be operated by magnets and men cursed to bake bread in silence for 1,000 years and magical jewels and boats that pilot themselves and a griffin's nest and some other stuff. I'd really like to compare this to the actual chanson de geste, but for some reason my pdf of the chanson won't load on my kindle and I don't want to read that many pages on a glowing screen, you know? Still it seems fairly faithful. Oh yeah, Huon becomes Auberon's heir and of course Shakespeare steals Auberon and turns him into Midsummer Night's Oberon. Good stuff.

Dan Quigley says

ISFDB lists this as Norton's first "in-genre" work. I consider that assessment an error. This is a faithful (as far as I am able to determine) retelling of a thirteenth century epic French poem of the romance tradition. Some might stretch to say that qualifies it as belonging to the fantasy tradition. After all, some French romance poems tell of Arthur, and anything Arthurian is usually considered fantasy. I won't argue the finer points of what is and is not genre. I'll just say that if it is fantasy, it's remote indeed from Tolkien.

This novel is horrid. I just tried to reread it and remembered what a snooze fest it was the first time I tried. I have downgraded this novel from two down to one stars. It is a complete failure. The writing is unnecessarily stilted, completely passive in voice. The plot is constrained by its source material. The only epic here is that reading this book is an epic waste of time.
