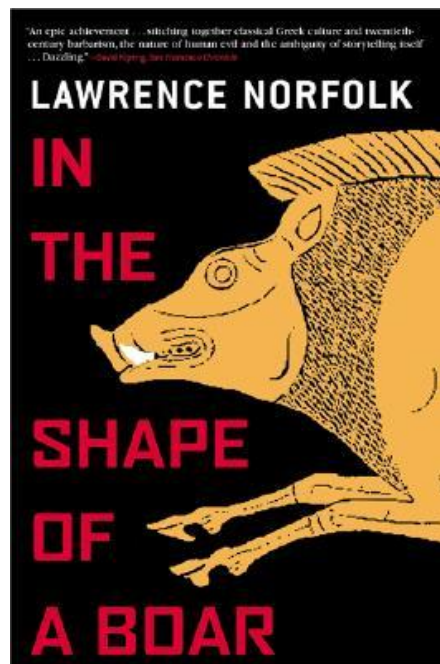




In the Shape of a Boar

Lawrence Norfolk

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Lawrence Norfolk's *In the Shape of a Boar* is a juggernaut of a novel, an epic tour de force of love and betrayal, ancient myths and modern horrors. The story begins in the ancient world of mythic Greece, where a dark tale of treachery and destructive love unfolds amid the hunt for the Boar of Kalydon -- a tale that will reverberate in those same hills across the millennia in the final chaotic months of World War II, as a band of Greek partisans pursues an S.S. officer on a mission of vengeance. After the war, a young Jewish Romanian refugee, Solomon Memel, who was among the hunters will create a poem based on the experience, which becomes an international literary sensation. But the truth of what happened in the hills of Kalydon in 1945 is more complicated than it seems, and as the older Sol reunites with his childhood love in 1970s Paris, the dark memories and horrors of those days will emerge anew. "... classical Greek culture and twentieth-century barbarism, the nature of human evil and the ambiguity of storytelling itself ... Dazzling." -- David Kipen, San Francisco Chronicle "Wonderfully complex ... a fascinating story built from layered narrative lines." -- Reamy Jansen, The Washington Post Book World "In the Shape of a Boar is a Herculean task accomplished with bravado and style ... storytelling of the highest echelon." -- Andrew Ervin, The Hartford Courant

In the Shape of a Boar Details

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From Reader Review In the Shape of a Boar for online ebook

Scott says

As always, excellent work from Norfolk. Of the four, this may be at number four for me, but it improved tremendously in the last third of the book. A turn that made me want to reread it and perhaps elevate it in my esteem.

Stephen says

this book I felt got better as it went along, did get bogged down in the first part which is a retelling of an ancient Greek tale with all of the notes attached. The second part Paris and interwoven with Romania in the 1930's and later Greece brings out the best in this author as you relive the terror of war and racism and hints of the ancient surface whilst prisoner of the Germans as characters emerge from the past. Secondly the thread of betrayal and lost love and living in the past and chasing lost dreams that the feeling with Ruth and Sol.

Perry Whitford says

I love the legends of Ancient Greece, and the first part of this novel is a modern day retelling of one of the most ancient of them all, the Boar Hunt of Kalydon, which features all the heroes from the generation before Achilles and Odysseus, including their venerable fathers of each.

It's outstanding, and even the copious pseudo-footnotes - which are crucial to the wider plot - didn't stop me enjoying it because I ignored them after a while and read them afterwards.

I really loved how Norfolk pictured the chthonic nature of the heroes, how they arise from the very clay and slime of the landscape, and I was involved in the three-way story of the Amazon Atalanta and her two suitors, Meleager and Meilanion.

That was where my involvement ended however, because sadly the modern day menage a trois which dominates the next part (and the bulk) of the novel was nothing like as engaging.

I couldn't bring myself to care too much about the poet Sol and his fight with Jakob for the affections of Ruth in war-threatened Romania, nor the implications of the meeting between Sol and Ruth in Paris decades later.

In the end this novel, after the visceral qualities of the first part, read to me like an intellectual exercise, and I don't doubt that I missed some of the subtleties, but regardless of that it's difficult to read 200+ pages about characters that you don't care about one way or the other.

Carlton Schuyler says

This is **really** hard to read.

Jim Talbott says

I was a little so-so on the book through the long annotated prose poem about Atalanta and the hunt for the Kalydonian boar, but it picks up a lot when it actually gets to the modern part of the story. This is coming from a person who also mostly skipped the Pale Fire poem in Pale Fire, so I'm guessing that it's my low brow tastes and not the actual content that was at fault. As I said though, the second half of the book kind of takes your breath away. Excellent.

Nathan says

A Jewish-Romanian man on the run in World War 2 falls in with some Greek partisans. After the war, he writes a poem on his experiences, linking them back to the Ancient Greek story of the Boar of Calydon. A lot of this book asks whether the character really witnessed what he claimed to and whether the poem is therefore less valid. This sort of thinking about literature tends to leave me cold, and so did this book. I freely admit that it was a little too intellectually complex for me, and I didn't get that much out of it. Still, good to get some mental fibre in the reading diet from time to time. Rated PG for some violence. 2/5

Laurie says

A difficult, yet intensely rewarding book. Greek myth coupled the lives and choices of a handful of Jews in WWII and after. Truth, lies and whether or not they matter.

Chani says

You can REALLY tell it was written by a man.

Gene Heinrich says

Liked this book though it got confusing at times... It is a very detailed book, as in plot. Loved the historical aspect, but the plot became too twisted to keep straight. I understand what he was trying to do in the writing, but details didn't add up in my mind. Perhaps it was because I was on vacation to really find those threads... If you read this, make sure it gets your FULL attention so you don't miss the small aspects

Laila says

Okumas? zorlu diyebilece?imiz bir kitap varsa bu kesinlikle onlardan biri! Hikayenin hikayesi diyebilece?im bir yap?s? var ve ilk bölümünün mitolojik muhte?emli?inin ard?ndan ikinci bölümde kurgunun içine girmek zorla??yor. Inatla okuyup azimle bitirdi?im için mutluyum.

Ve ahh Atalante...

Jen says

This novel has three strands. The first is a retelling of the Greek myth of Atlanta and the boar of Kalydon, which threatens the northern kingdoms of Ancient Greece. A group of heroic warriors of legendary fame come together under the leadership of Meilanion, to hunt the boar. He is accompanied at the climax of the hunt only by Atlanta and Meleager.

Centuries later, Sol, Ruth and Jakob are students in a provincial Romanian town when war breaks out. Sol is helped to flee deportation as a Jew by Ruth. He makes it over the Greek border where he is taken in by partisans and discovers their secret way through the mountains. When the Germans arrive in Greece, they capture the partisans and torture Sol to find out details of the secret path.

Many years later, Ruth decides to make a movie of Sol's famous poem, which describes the ancient boar hunt. The three threads of the story come together on the final day of shooting the movie.

Getvoldsen says

I rarely give up on a book before finishing it...I wish In The Shape of a Boar had been one of those rarities. Seriously a book for academics and serious literature fans only. Not something to sit down with at the end of a day and relax. Why use 1 word when you can use 240,000,000 to say the same thing seems to be the modus operandi employed here.

Marta says

First half of the book was difficult to read but actually interesting - I enjoyed the challenge. Second half was very different, a different kind of challenge (boring) I couldn't cope with, especially after the first part.
