



Ordeal In Otherwhere

Andre Norton

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When an outlaw seized control of the colonial planet Demeter, Charis Nordholm decided that it could no longer be her home. So she contracted herself into the service of an off-world trader, who assigned her to buy cloth from the mysterious Wyverns.

At first she was attracted to these shimmering dream-rulers of Warlock, and yearned to learn their secrets, but by the time she finally began to understand the menace of Warlock, it was almost too late.

Ordeal In Otherwhere Details

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James says

Charis Nordholm may be the first human female leading hero in hard SF. Though there are other books like *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* I haven't read yet that could make that claim. Another possible is *A Wrinkle in Time*, but I read it over forty years ago and my memory is not that good.

Norton tells a fine tale of bigotry starting with religious intolerance on Demeter where Charis is trafficked by some shady Free Traders to a deep sexual divide on the world of Warlock. Can she stop the evil company men from looting Warlock? (view spoiler)

An excellent read.

Greg says

An odd little adventure by Andre (Alice) Norton. It's quick and Norton only touches on a few interesting plot points, like a planet where religious zealots have killed or run off government workers and their families. Then the protagonist is off to the planet Warlock, run by Wyverns, female aliens who use dreams to keep their males subservient and to keep off-worlders at bay.

There's some stuff about selling fabric, then our heroine cleverly deduces the "magic" of the Wyverns and uses it to thwart some pirates. She's smart enough to realize that everyone's not playing fair (or nice) and she works to even things out.

It's a decent little adventure (the cover of this edition doesn't seem to have anything to do with anything) and probably the best thing about it are some helpful, intelligent animals. The whole magic/dreaming/telepathy thing is interesting but confusingly described at times. I enjoyed it, but Norton has better books out there.

Mary Catelli says

The sequel to *Storm Over Warlock* -- a fact I never knew until many years after I read this one. (I was rather young when that happened.)

It opens on the planet Demeter, where an extremely selective plague took out most of the men -- as if aimed at the government men, and those families who were most supportive of them. A fanatic leader persuaded them to take out the machinery, as well. And Charis, daughter of the education expert, is fleeing from the mob.

Well, they catch her. And she finds them dealing with a semi-legal Free Trader who's selling indefinite term labor contracts, so they can have the agricultural slaves they will need to support the colony, with the men dead and the machinery gone -- and is willing to buy hers. If she's willing to sign instead of being left there.

She ends up on Warlock, where a Free Trader is trying to use her to start trade with the Wyverns. There's

another woman there -- quite mad, terrified of the "snakes" -- so she was not his first try. She deduces the existence of a Survey base, and suspecting that the trader is operating illegally, tries to contact them, but before anything comes of it, the Wyverns reach her. They draw her toward the sea, at one point preventing her from contacting a Survey member, but providing food, and when she reaches it, she is welcomed, and they start to teach her.

But a Jack raid leads to more complications, and discoveries. The rest of the book involves her suddenly being cut free as the Wyverns must work together, a creature called a curl-cat, a comparison of native planets, a Wyvern attack being exploited as an escape, and broad discretion being used for an ambassador.

Nicole says

The Wyverns of planet Warlock are locked in battle within their cultures. The human slave arrives with the traders who wishes to sell her here.

Dantegideon says

Found everyone pretty unlikeable, I have to say. Mark of her talent that it was still gripping enough to finish.

Mely says

The first Norton I read, and still one of my favorites. Need to add edition I have (first hardcover, same as I read from the library ages and ages ago).

Charles says

I misplaced this book when I was about 10 pages from the end, and just found and finished it a couple of days ago. It probably doesn't say much for the book that in the several months before I read the last little bit I was only mildly curious about how it all turns out.

Still, it's enjoyable, and creates an interesting world of magic, science and telepathy. But the story and the characters never quite grabbed me, and it's the sort of book that I will completely forget within the year.

Jeff Dickison says

This may be the strangest book I have ever read. My theory: Norton read "Alice In Wonderland", smoked a couple of joints, drank some whiskey and wine, chewed up some peyote seeds, ate some magic mushrooms, and then set down and wrote this tale. I love Norton's imagination but this thing was bonkers and very difficult to follow at times. And how come they had earthly wolverines (even though they could converse telepathically) on a planet with only otherwise strange creatures? I really don't know if I would recommend

this to anyone or not. Proceed at your own risk.

P.D.R. Lindsay says

At a time when SF and Fantasy were in the doldrums Andre Norton kept it alive, especially for many YA readers. I always loved her books because her female character didn't scream and run away but actually were the real heroines. At a time when it was difficult to find strong female leads Andre Norton gave us so many.

This is still a good read despite its age and YA readers aren't the only ones to enjoy it.

John says

1982 grade C

Sandy says

Companion-like novel to Storm over Warlock. This book also takes place on Warlock, and Shann Lantree is a character in this one as well. However, our main character with this book is female. She is welcomed at first by the witches of Warlock, and when danger strikes, is able to help work towards a peaceful solution for all.

Doris says

We are introduced to Shann Lantee, related to Ris Lantee from the Forerunner series. In that way, then, this becomes a prequel.

Here, we deal with social issues and misunderstandings, plus a militaristic society that wants to take over. The Wyverns remind me of the Web mistresses from a short story by the same author, although that took place on the Witch World.

It was unsatisfying in that it never really reaches a conclusion - it simply ends. Overall worth reading for the social issues it addresses.

Bernadette says

After the colonial planet Demeter descends into chaos, taken over by prejudice and an outlaw, Charis Nordholm takes the first way out - a indefinite labor contract with a trader. It is this contract that brings her to the planet Warlock to be a go-between in meetings with the mysterious natives. But nothing is quite what it seems on the planet of the dreamers, and Charis must walk a fine line between dream and truth as she discerns what the real danger here is.

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Not one of Norton's best by any means, but an enjoyable sci-fi escape. It's always a breath of fresh air to have a strong heroine without any romance.

Keith says

A good and well done 1960's read. This novel involves an interesting young female protagonist fleeing trouble on a conservative religious planet. She successfully arrives on another planet to face further difficulties. She meets up with Shan Lantree (from: Storm Over Warlock), two "special" wolverines companions and an alien Curl Cat.

Valerie says

This edition seems fairly durable, but it's bound too close to the margins, so it's often difficult to read words near the end of sentences. Also, there are many uncorrected typos.

This sort of acts as a bridge between Storm over Warlock and Forerunner Foray, since the male lead in Forerunner Foray is Ris Lantee, apparently the son of Shann Lantee and Charis Nordholm (introduced in this book).

It's a better book than the first, but Forerunner Foray is better still in some ways. There's less of a militaristic trend, though conflicts are introduced that don't get resolved (What DID happen on Demeter after the abusive followers of Tolskegg sold Charis into slavery, for example?).
