



Night of Masks

Andre Norton , Gray Morrow (Illustrator)

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The story concerns Nik Colherne, who aids in a kidnapping to win a new face to replace his scarred one. He gets his new face and fights to free the kidnapped boy - and himself - from the Thieves Guild. It is a rattling good adventure story which should be relished by science-fiction buffs of all ages

Night of Masks Details

Date : Published 1964 by Ace Books

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Author : Andre Norton , Gray Morrow (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Night of Masks for online ebook

Alice says

Somewhat disappointed that this sequel doesn't follow Troy Hogan, Reme and the intelligent animals from cat's eye. So far Nik seems a far less appealing character than Troy, and I quite like the animals.

Carolyn says

Read as part of the Masks of the Outcasts omnibus.

Valerie says

This book, as many of Norton's, begins in the Dipple on Korwar (I had forgotten how attractive the depiction of the Dipple was to me in this volume). A disfigured boy is hired to impersonate the imaginary hero of a small boy, for reasons that never are satisfactorily explained.

The world of Dis is odd, and too often viewed in lightning-like flashes (the dedication reads: "The author wishes to express appreciation to Charles F Kelly; who supplied the information leading to the development of Dis") Though there are evidently intelligent inhabitants, no real attempt is made to recruit them to help the escaping boys. It might easily have been possible to appeal to the locals' resentment of the invasion of their land to encourage them to help escapees, but there's no evidence this occurs to anybody.

The notion that a loving family would permit a child to be conditioned to be unable to eat anything from off-world, btw, is a horrifying one. I understand that it was intended to prevent the boy from being kidnapped, but there have GOT to be other ways.

One thing that seems never to have dealt with was that the Dipple; so long as it exists; is going to be a reservoir of discontent and a recruiting ground for dissidents and rebels. Even relatively mild mannered Dipple residents become a threat if they can't find any legitimate escapes.

Which raises Shevek's question: "Where are women"? There is; by my count; ONE woman in this book--and she's not of the Dipple: she's evidently a contractor for the Thieves' Guild. In other books with the Dipple in them; adult women are either dead or dying. And there seems to be only one girl: Ziantha from Forerunner Foray. What DID become of the women and girls who were probably the majority of the refugees sent to the Dipple?

Maegrauko says

[Especially because the complete lack of day and night cycle, it was particularly bad in Night of masks. I suppose we share the same kind of confusion with the main character but most of the times it seems like he

fed the kid the previous page and now the kid is starving already? (hide spoiler)]

Doris says

This book begins the ghetto area known as the Dipple on the planet Korwar. Here we have a disfigured young man, Nik, who is hired by a ring of kidnappers to impersonate the imaginary hero of a small boy. The reasons for the kidnapping seem to be vaguely political, but the goal of Nik is obvious – if successful he will undergo expensive facial reconstruction to allow him to meld in with society. Like this world, Korwar also discriminates against those that are different. At the time this book was originally published, disfigured and disabled people were often sequestered, sometimes to the extent that outsiders to the family might not even know the poor person existed.

This then, is the premise behind the story – finding a way to entertain yet gently remind everyone that this kind of treatment is not only not right, but could have repercussions, as it does when Nik leaps at the chance to change and be "normal".

Tim says

Sort of "inherited" a collection of "Andre Norton books when we moved into our current house. Picked this one at random, as I had not read any of Norton. I've read a bit about her, and her books are largely aimed at a juvenile/YA audience, with characters who have a good deal of pluck and inner resourcefulness to overcome dangers and other challenges. This one tells of a youth, Nik, who is disfigured and gets a chance to have a normal-looking face if he will kidnap Vandy, a 10 year old son of a planetary official and take him from Dipple (one of the planets in one of her series) to Dis, a frontier world with feral denizens and an abandoned city/fortress. Nik accomplishes the kidnapping by pretending to be "Hacon," a sort of fantasized superhero that is Vandy's own hero. The action goes by fits and starts and some of the passages were either confusing or just plain boring, but the gumption of both Nik and Vandy eventually triumphs, in a fairly satisfying manner. Will certainly read the others in this collection, but not right away.

Andrea says

Although starting in the same place - with a loner outsider in the ghetto of Dipple - this is a far less successful book than Catseye. While the morally weak position of the main character is workable, the very long survival and monsters sections that make up a large portion of the book are for the most part just repetitive and dull.

colleen says

read 12.18.85

Keith says

I enjoyed this unique novel in the 1960's. A poor and badly disfigured young man agrees to do a kidnapping. He gets a brand new unscarred face in return. Nik kidnaps a young boy and changes his mind. He does not want any harm to come to the young boy and then proceeds to help the young boy escape in an alien world, knowing he himself might become a monster once more.

Hannah says

Was one of my defining early reads. Compelling characters. Point of view character is moral and yet desperate enough that he is an easy dupe, despite experience. Faces up to a prime example of a Norton **alien** world.

I spent some time trying to figure out how exactly he was shielding his face and promptly got in the habit of using my stylized 'mask' in school when I wished to withdraw from the situation? Eventually remembered where the habit had come from and decided it wasn't a good habit to encourage, so have dropped it.

Sye Keene says

Orphan saves the "Prince"

War orphan gets drawn into intrigue as a pawn and scapegoat only to prove his worth and save the kidnapped boy.

Similar to many of Ms. Norton's the orphaned waif proves to be strong then suspected..
