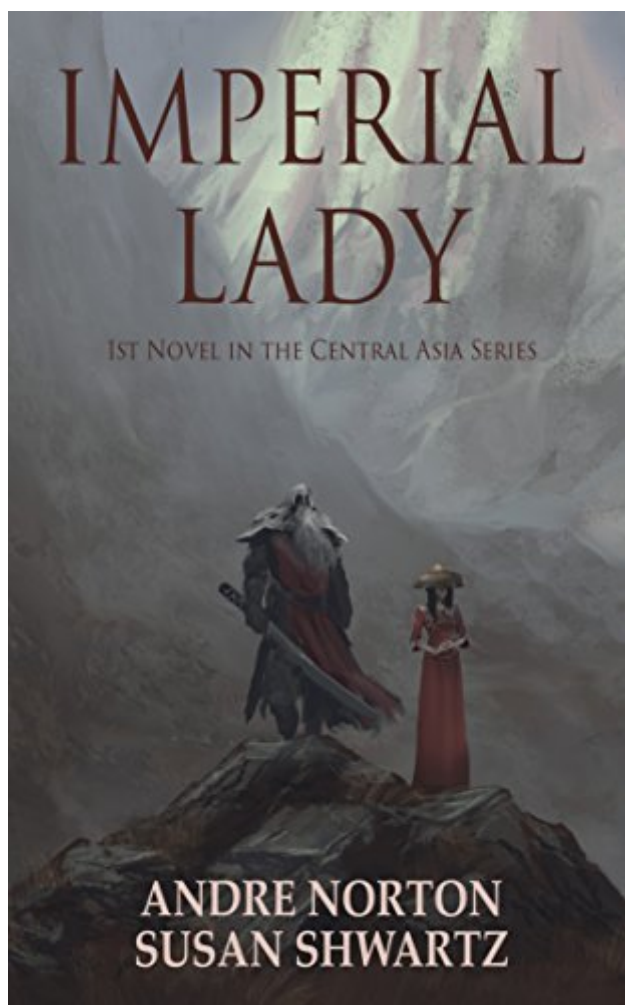


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Imperial Lady (Central Asia Series Book 1)



Synopsis

The daughter of a general banished from the Imperial presence accepts her fate as a political tool and turns a marriage of convenience to an aging barbarian chief into a crusade to bring honor to her family and avert a catastrophic war. Her name was Lady Silver Snow, and she lived in a distant land long ago, the hand of fate brought her to the sumptuous court of the Son of Heaven, Emperor of China, to be his concubine. But it was her own intelligent and passionate spirit that led her beyond those sheltered walls and into the "barbarian" grasslands - to be a queen! Andre Norton and Susan Schwartz blend Chinese history and folklore into this tale of

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have absolutely no idea how I came across this book. I have never heard of this author and I don't read fantasy books, but here I am. Lady Silver Snow is living in banishment with her disgraced father and his faithful warriors. She is out hunting when an imperial messenger

arrives. Her first thought is that she is glad she was hunting as they would at least be able to put on a feast for the important person. The descriptions of the surroundings are lyrical, and paint a beautiful picture of the snow-covered countryside and of the ancient half-fort, half-mansion that is Silver Snow's home. The descriptions of the people who surround her are also vivid. Silver Snow's father tells her she has been summoned as one of 500 women to be concubines of the Son of Heaven in the capital, Chang-an. Red-haired, green-eyed Willow, maid to Silver Snow, travels with her, and they have a guard comprising her father's soldiers and Imperial soldiers. It is an arduous month-long journey to the capital and on the way they are attacked by bandits. Silver Snow, herself, takes part in the battle as she has been raised by her father as a boy-child, and is deadly with a bow and arrow and knife. She has been brought up on the Analects and Confucius, can read and write, and, apart from sewing, has few of the desirable feminine accomplishments so important in the Palace. On arrival in the city she is taken before the chief eunuch, and it seems as though she makes an enemy. Mao Yen-shou is greedy for expensive gifts that Silver Snow cannot give him, so he discredits her. She is banished to the Cold Palace, where she lives with Willow in solitude, shunned by all, except when the other ladies want to make use of her. In a strange series of events, as part of a peace treaty, Silver Snow is selected to be the bride of Khuja-nga, the shan-yu (Supreme Leader) of the barbarian Hsiung-nu, who live even further north than her own home. It is a long three-month journey to her new home and there are adventures on the way. What happens to a tiny woman of the Han when she arrives in the grasslands that are to be her home from now on? So far she has survived living as the daughter of a disgraced marquis and general, a shunned outcast in the Cold Palace in the capital city, but can she survive the harsh, nomadic life of the Hsiung-nu? How will she be treated, and will she ever be accepted? Will Silver Snow and Willow prevail against the hatred and power of the shaman? This is an amazing story, riveting, absorbing and I am so glad I stumbled across it. The sheer poetry of the prose is a source of wonder and delight, and the story itself is magical. Silver Snow is the most developed character, with Willow a good second. Some of the other characters are very well-drawn, but others I would expect to be well-developed aren't portrayed as I expected them to be. That this in no way detracted from my enjoyment or investment in this story is testament to the writer's skills. Although Book 1 is included in the title, sadly, there is no follow-on to this book, however, this story is complete in itself. The Historical Note at the end ties the book up beautifully and sets it in context. This has gone into my 'Favourites' folder and will be re-read soon. Recommend for those with an interest in history, fantasy, and with a marvellous protagonist and second lead.

I have long been a fan of Andre Norton (aka Mary Alice Norton), having gotten started with her Witch World series back in the 60s. I had not tried her other works, though, until now. I have just spent the last hours devouring Imperial Lady and The White Jade Fox. AMAZING! Indelible characters, immaculate research, and wonderful plots! Looks like I will be making my way through all of the Asia series..

This is an excellent blending of history and and fiction. It allows the past to come alive while engaging the imagination.

I enjoyed this book from beginning to end. But I found it frustrating to pronounce the name's in the book.

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