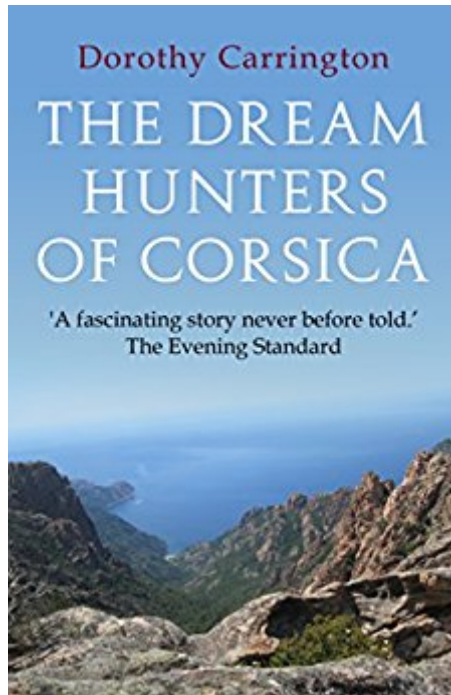




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# The Dream-Hunters Of Corsica



## Synopsis

Corsica: a wild, intransigent land isolated by sea and mountains. Here are the mazzeri, dream-hunters who can foresee death. At night they go hunting or dream they do and kill an animal in the face of which they recognise the face of a living person. Once pinpointed by the dream-hunter, that person will not have long to live. Unlike the mazzeri, the signadori are guardians of life, practising folk medicine, securing release from the curse of the Evil Eye and casting spells infused with light and hope. With characteristic elegance and clarity, Dorothy Carrington investigates these extraordinary phenomena, unique forms of magic which probably date from prehistoric times. The Dream-Hunters of Corsica provides a fascinating insight into a forgotten corner of civilisation, where the occult has retained its everyday place as an explanation of the mysteries of life and death. An engaging compendium of folk tradition, fables and superstition. Carrington's accessible book, obviously a labour of love, will appeal not only to travellers, but to anyone interested in the psychological landscapes of the imagination.

**THE EUROPEAN** The book is a scoop • a fascinating story never before told

**EVENING STANDARD** Dorothy Carrington read English at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and lived in France, Austria, East Africa and London before settling in Corsica with her late husband, the painter Sir Francis Rose. She has written many books in English and in French on Corsican subjects, and has contributed to reviews and learned journals in England, France, Italy and Sweden. Her second book, *Granite Island: A Portrait of Corsica*, won the Heinemann Award in 1971 and *Napoleon and his Parents* was awarded the literary prize of the Napoleonic Society of America in 1993. In 1968 and 1971 she was appointed visiting Assistant Professor of Social Anthropology at Queens College, City University of New York, and she is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Historical Society and a member of the International Commission for Representative and Parliamentary Institutions. She has lectured and participated in congresses in England, mainland France, Italy, the USA and Russia. Dorothy Carrington has received numerous awards and decorations including the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, the title Doctor Honoris Causa from the University of Corsica, the Prix Spécial du Jury de Livre Corse for the totality of her work in Corsica over the last forty years. She was decorated with the MBE in 1995. Endeavour Press is the UK's leading independent digital publisher. For more information on our titles please sign up to our newsletter at [www.endeavourpress.com](http://www.endeavourpress.com). Each week you will receive updates on free and discounted ebooks. Follow us on Twitter: @EndeavourPress and on Facebook via <http://on.fb.me/1HweQV7>. We are always interested in hearing from our readers. Endeavour Press believes that the future is now.

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## Customer Reviews

The book "Dream-Hunters of Corsica" is a rather specialized but well-written and easy to read account of the esoteric traditions based in Corsica, which is now a province of France. Although we all may know that that's where Napoleon Bonaparte came from, I don't think many can claim any detailed knowledge about the island, and more specifically about the occult that this island nurtures on its soil. The mazzeri, or the dream-hunters are unlike the dreamers in the Eurasian or Mesoamerican traditions, they are not "dreamers-for-hire" nor are they part of any specialized organization. They simply complete "the call" and you would have to read the book to find out more about it. The history of the island has a lot to do with its special topography, which includes the marshes and the mountains, as well as low forests, the macchias. However, some, like mountains are considered favorable for human inhabitants, while others, such as the streams and the rivers are not considered a good thing, and are generally considered to inhabit evil influences. They are present in the world of the dream-hunters who sometimes complete their assignments near them, or other times receive specialized messages about someone's death, which is the only professional

direction of the mazzeris' "work". Writer masterfully relates Catholicism that has become the dominant religion of the island to the independent attitude of its inhabitants. Although, it is present in the people's life, apparently deep down inside, the Corsican psyche is still susceptible towards the ancient winds that are brashly blowing through that rough terrain. Corsicans live out their past in the present, and while the future is dim, the past is clear, and they, for the most part are not looking to abandon it. The cult, if I could call it that way, of the dream-hunters is not as powerful now, as it was say in the end of the 19th century, but there are still people around who are walking at night, and depending on which way our civilization will turn, it will either come back to its fully-fledged ancient form, or will almost disappear all together. I sure hope it doesn't as the world would be at a loss without this very rare, and exquisite connection to the other civilization which dominated the island, and perhaps even the bigger part of the Earth many a millennia ago, of which the mazzeri could be a remnant.

A good description of the ancient occult beliefs and practices of the people of Corsica, and how those beliefs and practices correlate to others from around the world.

I found this book both enjoyable and useful for the research I am doing on Corsica and Napoleon. As a British woman who lived on Corsica for many years, the author has a unique perspective on the island. She is also a meticulous researcher.

Just wow. Who knew such a thing? Definitely recommend this for anyone interested in the occult, witchcraft, folklore, or are just forever seeking out the unknown and obscure.

As one traipses across European lands, seeing a church spire on every hill, one might be forgiven for the failure to consider the history that predates the birth of a holy man in the Middle East. Rich, vibrant and diverse traditions permeated every nook and cranny until the Church, willfully ignoring the command "love thy neighbor..." started to stamp out 'heretics'. It succeeded only too well, however, as far as I can tell most cultures managed to preserve esoteric practices and traditions that are handed down the family tree but hidden away from the prying eye of the priest. In Corsica, Carrington tells us in this hard-to-put-down book, these traditions have, until very recently, been very much part of daily life. Similar in many ways to Sicily and Sardinia, this rough, tough and unsentimental land has been ruled by family/village clans that sometimes spent decades in murderous vendettas. Although speaking an Italian dialect themselves, Corsicans hated and

resisted Genoese and fascist invaders; despite giving France its Emperor and many colonial administrators, the island has never been truly French. The culture itself is staunchly Catholic yet its religious rituals and beliefs are permeated with pre-Christian concerns. This includes meeting the spirits ('spirdi') of the dead, the 'mubba' - a procession of phantom pigs passing the house at night, the 'malaceddu', and the phantom funeral procession ('la Squadra d'Arozza') entering the village at broad daylight. Carrington is especially intrigued by 'mazzeri' - who prowl the landscape in their dream-bodies looking for animals to kill; as they do, they look into the dying animal's eyes and inevitably see someone they know, someone close to them, who therefore is condemned to die. The author has met a few of the mazzeri and describes their personal power, dignity and belief they are defending their communities. This book is a very rare case where indigenous European dream practices are presented to an outsider. Carrington does a brilliant job depicting the harsh Corsican landscape, the equally harsh history with relentless invasions by meddling foreigners and the Corsican character shaped by the combined forces of land and history. The most interesting parts of the book are of course those that deal with native 'shamanic' traditions, the mazzeri, the signadori, the streghe i stregoni (witches), the 'voceri' and Catholic rituals which, for all intents and purposes, represent a direct continuation of ancient practices leading back to the megaliths still found across the island. I found the book to be readable, informative yet, in the best British travelogue tradition, never self-imposing. Its minor downsides are occasional repetitiveness and the fact that the author herself met very few of these remarkable practitioners, and thus had to mostly rely on informants and literature. There are, as DC herself notes, intriguing parallels but just as obvious differences from Friulian 'benandanti' popularized by Ginsberg and Gavriel Kay. It would be interesting to hear more about comparable practices in, say Sardinian accabadores, donne-spiritos and pannas as well as hidden Sicilian and Calabrian traditions. All in all, this is an excellent book. If you are visiting Au-Dela-des-Monts, it will make your visit much richer and more exciting. A propos: lists "Rudolf Steiner" as a coauthor of this book. This is clearly a mistake which no one has had the incentive to correct. At the time the book was published the old spiritualist had been dead for three quarters of a century.

The Dream Hunters of Corsica by Dorothy Carrington is a free NetGalley ebook that I began reading in mid-March. Originally written in 1995 regarding Carrington's attempts at a travelogue in 1948, she follows the mazzeri - a group of villagers scattered throughout the island of Corsica off the west coast of Italy. She frames the area as being somewhat remote, a little out of time, before revealing the mazzerismes' revered portents (usually a dog familiar) and rituals. They claim to be able to enter

each other's dreams (or the dreams of an uninitiated, yet disliked villager) and wage battles with the victor waking up triumphant and ready to battle again and the loser succumbing to real-life sicknesses, often leading to their deaths. It seems somewhat wonky, but a great precursor to, say, the lore of the Candyman or Freddy Krueger.

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