



# The Defiant Agents

*Andre Norton*

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## **The Defiant Agents** Andre Norton

Travis Fox, Apache Indian and an expert in time travel, volunteers for a mission to colonize the planet of Topaz. But when he and his fellow Apaches find themselves reverting to the ways of their ancient warrior race, Fox suspects that a dangerous force is responsible--and that there's more at stake than just their lives.

## **The Defiant Agents Details**

Date : Published October 15th 1987 by Ace (first published February 1962)

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Author : Andre Norton

Format : Paperback

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction

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## From Reader Review The Defiant Agents for online ebook

\_ says

This third entry in the Time Agents/Ross Murdock series was not as good as the previous two. The main reason was not the writing, but the premise on which the adventure starts.

Travis Fox, a time agent recruit of Apache heritage - who was a main character in the last book in the series - is supposed to be a volunteer on a colonizing mission to the planet Topaz. He and several others with historically nomadic or naturalistic ethnic backgrounds are specifically selected by the American government for settling this planet because... well, it's a frontier? See, this is where the logic fails. The author wanted a story about Native American interplanetary settlers...so, reasons were found... just not very good ones. Supposedly, they were being regressed so they would have a better chance at survival. They even had a special machine as a backup plan that would allow them to mentally live out the lives of their ancestors somehow (as preparation for survival on the new planet?) This ends up being used (last resort) when their ship is shot down by the Russians who have beaten them to the planet.

Side note: this is 18 months after they got the spaceship from the last book back to Earth. Somehow in that time, they let the whole world share in their knowledge (which they could have kept totally secret and would have during the real Cold War). And, they (and the Russians and others) have managed to reverse engineer it and build working copies.

Credulity: Strained

So, back to the Topaz thing.... well, the Russians imported their own natives (Mongols) but being very bad people, the Russians are using mind control to make them slaves. \*sigh\* Why? It's just dumb.

There just wasn't any way for me to dismiss these failed premises. I mean, seriously, you are going to establish a colony on another planet, and you select people based on their 'rugged ancestry', and then you don't supply them with any technology at all? No supplies? I mean, the ship should be able to make round trips, shouldn't it? Sure, it gets shot down, but you didn't plan for that to happen, right? I just can't think of a good reason to excuse this silliness. The author wanted to write about Indians on another planet, so the reasons why they are there and still at a primitive tech level don't matter enough to be plausible? Survey Says: \*baaammph\*

So, you may be able to see my problems with the book. But... set aside nonsense (if you can) and the story becomes one of low tech vs high tech. Oh, and I forgot to mention the telepathic coyotes... they're pretty cool. And there's some alien stuff in there too. The writing is fine, and the characters are understandable, maybe even relate-able at times. In summary, the book isn't bad, but it's not all that good. I hope the next in the series is better.

So, only two stars, and I call this one a Confusing Premise Read.

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**Debbie J says**

[suffer hapless contr

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## Rebecca says

### Good second book

I really liked this book but... I was really confused when I first started to read it and much time had passed and not o lynch that but from the sound of it a whole book missing. We leave off of what they will do next and they plan to find more ships in time but certainly to find out a handful of them end up accidentally going to space, visit three planets and have some adventures!!! Now what wasn't this written about? It really did confuse me and I had to stop reading and go back to see if I had missed a book or two. I just don't understand why she would have not written a book about that and instead just moves to much later with them in space and getting ready to land when something happens. It was really confusing and I really like I was missing a lot of knowledge about what was going on. In fact after reading this book which was really good by the way, I still feel that way but then so do the people who survived the landing because they don't k ow how the heck they ended up there either! So kind of need 8 I say it again... confusing, lol.

About the book though it was a really interesting well written story and it was really exciting at times but I think in all book one was such better story. I will take a look at book three and see what it's about, who knows it maybe the missing time between book one and two! ?

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## Sue says

I was surprised to see so many high ratings for this book. I am a fan of classic sci fi and of Andre Norton in particular. However, this story seems to be less developed than the others in this series. There are a few subplots that are left unanswered, which is unsatisfying. Also, many of the ethical decisions made by the main character, Travis Fox, are dubious, although he is supposedly held up as a moral example of goodness. For example, he is sickened when he accidentally kills a man with his alien "burner," or blaster, yet feels it would be acceptable to kill someone with a knife or bare hands. He also puts a confusing plan into motion that calls for kidnapping a young female ally and placing her into a horribly frightening situation because it's the "only way" (?) to lure the Reds out. Overall, I think it is one of Norton's laziest efforts. It feels like a first draft to me and I wish the plot had been tightened up.

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## Le Kellum says

### Good read.

Andre Norton was the author who awakened my love for reading. Every one of her books is like revisiting an old friend.

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## Kat Hooper says

2.5 stars. Originally posted at Fantasy Literature. <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

The Defiant Agents is the third book in Andre Norton's TIME TRADERS series about a secret United States government program that uses time travel to solve geopolitical problems, especially those involving the Cold War with the Russians. In the first book, The Time Traders, we met Ross Murdock, a criminal who avoided

his sentence by signing on with the Time Traders and discovering the source of the Russians' new powers. In the second book, *Galactic Derelict*, we met Travis Fox, an Apache who joined the Time Traders and was sent to recover an alien spaceship.

In this third book, the United States has tossed all ethics out the window and decided that the end justifies the means. They've used a process called Redax on Travis Fox and some other unknowing Apache volunteers which causes them to forget their modern selves and embrace their inner Apache. The government sends them to a newly discovered primitive planet where they hope the Apaches, now channeling their ancestors, will be able to subdue it. Meanwhile the Russians have used the same process on the descendents of the Mongols and sent them to the same planet. Thus we have a U.S. /Russian war being fought between Apaches and Mongols on a distant world.

Sounds a little silly, but if you can get past the premise (which I had trouble doing), you'll find a story containing the kind of action and angst that Andre Norton's fans love. There are even telepathic wolves, which is really cool. This is not one of Norton's best stories, however. It doesn't at all feel organic and, with the exception of Travis Fox, the "Reds" and "Mongols" are simply stereotypes. It feels more like Norton wanted to write a story about Native Americans in a science fiction context and, indeed, I've read in several places that this book was written after one of Norton's friends complained that there were no science fiction books where Native Americans were the protagonists.

I'm looking forward to book four, *Key Out of Time*, which again focuses on Ross Murdock. I want to find out about the advanced alien race that may be providing technology to the Russians.

All of the books in the *TIME TRADERS* series are now in the public domain and can be found for free online. I bought the free Kindle version and then used the Whispersync deal to buy the audio version with Paul Boehmer's narration for \$1.99. I'd recommend this version if you want to read *The Defiant Agents*.

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## Robyn says

Early Bird Books Deal | Let down by too many impossibilities, the story does still grab the attention. | If I'd accidentally read these books out of order and started with this one, I almost certainly would not have continued with the series. There's too much here that's ridiculous. In the short time after the return of the ship from the previous book, the Russians were able to infiltrate the American research in such a way that they could not just match the work being done, but succeed it, regress their own warriors, place them on the target planet, and set up a full-scale planetary defense system that was capable of knocking the arriving American ship out of the sky? And in the time they took to do all that, they didn't either discover the alien technology on the world they occupied prior to the American arrival, or set up a secondary defense against ground invasion? With all that knowledge, a full group of enthralled slaves, and homefield advantage, they could be so easily beaten by about a dozen people, originally archaeologists and MIT grads, just because of some memory regression that placed Apache warrior skills forefront in the minds of their opponents? With just the "trip tapes" brought back from the previous book, the Americans in that short time chose Topaz as their prime target, learned enough about it to decide long-unused Apache skills would be more useful than modern training and technology, recruited volunteers, regressed them, had political upheaval changing who had control over decisions, built the ship, staffed it, found their traitor, and launched the mission? None of this book resembles reality on any level!

And yet, it's an entertaining read, which I kept turning pages in. Disappointed in Fox, I liked him better in the previous book, before he was regressed and went into really weird moral territory. How would the instinctive warrior response killing a man with an automatic weapon be better than the instinctive warrior response killing a man with an alien burner weapon?! If he'd had the other gun in his hand instead of in his sash, it would have been the same. Swing around, squeeze trigger, dead enemy. And the message seemed so

muddled. We have to keep this from their hands because they're evil! We take a moment to recognize that it's still evil even in our hands! So we must use the evil to keep it from the other evil! We are aware that if our own people had it, they would be evil with it! So let's kill and destroy with it! Just weird, all around, and yet I kept reading. So Norton clearly had some skill, even if the book is a combination of desperate stretches and leaps in order to justify sci-fi Apaches.

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### **Thomas says**

#### **Classic Andre Norton**

My favorite author as a young reader, still reading her books fifty years later. Interesting characters and a story line suitable for all ages of readers.

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### **Henry E Geist says**

Interesting ending to the time trader series

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### **Al Lock says**

This is sort of a mix of historical fiction (Mongol and Apache) and Science Fiction. It isn't great, but it is a good read.

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### **Mary Alexander says**

This is at least the eighth time I have read this book. I will keep going back to it in the future as it is well written and still relevant.

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### **Julie Davis says**

The second book in the Time Traders series which I also had on my Kindle, I began this one after reading Time Traders. It was perfect vacation reading and one that I hadn't read before.

One of Andre Norton's friends wondered why there were no sf books with Apaches in them so she obligingly wrote this interesting tale of time travel. When a troop of modern scientists, who also happen to be Apaches, are nefariously injected with a drug that forces their minds to revert to ancient patterns (in this case, that of Indians in the Old West) and then loads them onto a spaceship for a planet that they want explored ... well, we know something is going to go wrong. The ship crashes and the scientists are left battling not only their "double minds" with tendencies to revert to the old ways while also retaining knowledge of the "new ways" but also each other and a mysterious band of other "natives" they discover. Yes, the Cold War continues with the Reds' attempt at the same thing and the mysterious, evil aliens interfering as well.

Great fun and, as I said, a great vacation read.

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### **Valerie says**

None of the cover pictures match my edition, and as I'm not sure which edition I have...

The stolen technology of the 'Baldies' is pretty thoroughly repudiated by the 'defiant agents' in question, marooned on the planet Topaz.

It's not clear how much of the alien technology of the Cold Warriors in this book is stolen, how much is homegrown, and how much is hybrid.

The most implausible part to me is the idea that you can indoctrinate people to 'regress' them back to 'racial (stereo)types'. Both the Mongols and the 'Apaches' had wide contact with the outside world, and there was a great deal of cultural as well as physical cross-fertilization.

Note also that whenever the characters in the book consider vile behavior, they feel they **MUST** accept these steps (murder, torture, enslavement), because their (cardboard cutout) enemies might take up the accursed technology--a version of 'this musn't be allowed to fall into the wrong hands'. In such cases, ANY hands are the wrong hands--which people recognize, but set aside on the basis that 'the end justifies the means' (explicitly stated in what amounts to the preface.)

The 'Reds' are not merely stereotypes themselves, they're not granted any identity at ALL. We never learn a single name, rarely see a face, and know **NOTHING** about their personal histories.

At one point, a shadowy 'Red' is disintegrated by a reflex attack by Travis Fox, a decidedly maculate 'hero'. He laments that it's acceptable to kill people with knives, arrows, and even guns--but disintegration is beyond the pale. How's that again?

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### **Bram Slaats says**

like how this syfy story still has it roots in the earthly past.

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### **Lyn says**

The very first SF book I read was Andre Norton's "The Defiant Agents." I was thirteen at the time and my mother bought it for me by mistake. By that, I mean she opened it at random and read, "fresh hoof prints" and thought, "Lyn will enjoy this, it's about horses."

LOL nope, it was about time agents (actually the third book in a series) and I was hooked from the very beginning. I remember feeling a sense of outrage when Colonel Kelgarries sends Ashe to New York and then immediately orders the Apaches to the isolation of the "Hypno-Lab, knowing that Ashe can't possibly warn them before his plane leaves. Subterfuge, trickery, and betrayal. All the makings of a good read. Andre Norton has the ability to make you love some characters and hate others so much that you wish you could smash them in the face (but then that's my thirteen-year-old self talking) :-)

I can't say how many times I've read it - at least twenty I would think. It's been a few years since I last read it, so I think it's time to dust it off and travel once more with Travis Fox and his fellow Apache to the jewel-like disk of gold-brown called Topaz.

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### **Janelle says**

Silly premise for a story, but it was still enjoyable.

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### **Serena says**

Andre Norton took Travis Fox and ran away with him to another planet, all on his own; when he had been one of three characters, he wasn't very noticeable - but in this setting, all on his own, he clearly stands out and shines. I quite liked the mysteries here, and all the little things that added up to the finish.

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### **astaliegurec says**

I'm torn. Andre Norton's "The Defiant Agents" (the third in her "Time Traders" series) is well-written at the technical level: the story follows its premise nicely and the world and characters are reasonably done. But, the premise and setup are, in a word, stupid. Here are the problems (and all of this shows up in the first chapter or so):

- First, as near as I can tell, this book takes place about 18 months after the end of the previous book. Somehow, in that time, they've not only reverse-engineered the alien ship they found, but also managed to build their own such ships. I have no idea how they managed that or where they found similar materials, fuel, or a compatible control system.
- Second, for no rational reason, it seems that when the crew returned at the end of the last book, they decided to share not only the technology of the ship, but the actual navigation "tapes" they came back with (and the tapes went out by lot (i.e., random tapes to random countries)). Together, this amounts to the giving away of worlds to not just allies, but to actual enemies (remember, this is a world mired in a Cold War). Since the return trip in that book was a mirror image of the forward trip, I'd assume they'd have landed where they took off. IOW, outside of a UFO report, no one should have known about any of this and everything would have, could have, and should have remained secret.
- Third (and this one's the killer), for various reasons, someone decided that it would be a good idea to use a handy newfangled invention to turn their hand-picked, volunteer, cream-of-the-crop colonists into savages by mentally regressing them to their ancient ancestors' time. Why they would want a colony to be populated by ignorant, superstitious savages, I don't know. Well, actually, I do know. Supposedly, it's to give them that survival edge that's been bred out of their current civilization. But,...
- Fourth, the trip time from Earth to Topaz (the colony world) is never stated, but from the trip time in the previous book, it's probably on the order of days. So, instead of sending a live-off-the-land colony, they should have been sending a super high tech colony and shuttling in new materials and people constantly.
- Fifth, the colony they sent wasn't big enough for a good gene pool. Plus, with the racial selection process

they used, the gene pool they did have is too closely related.

So, as I said, I'm torn. With the above premises, I could have given the book two stars. But, again, the writing in support of those premises is fine. After waffling over this, I've decided to go with the OK 3 star out of 5 rating. But, I could very easily see why someone else might rate it lower.

The books in Andre Norton's "Time Trader" series are:

1 and 2: Time Traders: The Time Traders & Galactic Derelict

3: The Defiant Agents

4: Key Out of Time

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### **Brett says**

I love how each book in this series is completely different to the last, while maintaining enough of a link to make them feel part of an ongoing series. I highly recommend this series.

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### **Troy Dye says**

#### **Defiant Agents by Andre Norton**

Fifty year old gold, Science Fiction from a master. Apache and Mongol warriors are transported to an alien planet as slave labor, but with the secrets of a long dead race they unite to fight for freedom.

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