

Gene Wolfe: The Soldier series

The SF-Lovers list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 17 Aug 1992

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Rolando Vinluan — 17 Aug 1992, 01:16

I just finished Soldier of Arete. It was truly unique, though-provoking, exciting...I like it better than his New Sun series, actually, in part because it deals with real history. I'm going to re-read Soldier of the Mist then next time I'm home.

Questions:

- 1) Pindaros's chapter in the end, trying to mimic Homer I think, was a bit confusing. The Amazon (Pharetra/Hippostizein) won the chariot race, right? Was this because Latro let him win it?
- 2) I don't have the first book, and the second doesn't come with a map, so can somebody help me with the modern names of the places? Rope is Sparta, Thrace is well, Thrace. But Hill, Tower Hill, Sestos, Nestos, Cowland...HELP!?!?
- 3) Is this the third book out yet? I don't think it's in paperback, but in hardcover?
- 4) Who else besides me likes this series better than the New Sun series (though honestly, I haven't read "Urth of the New Sun" yet).
- 5) Any good books about Ancient Greece you can recommend? My main reference was Will Durant's "The Story of Civilization," which is of course good and a classic, but I don't have that with me right now.

Gavin Steyn — 17 Aug 1992, 03:50 · follows Rolando Vinluan

rvinluan at cs.cornell.edu (Rolando Vinluan) writes:

- 2) I don't have the first book, and the second doesn't come with a map, so can somebody help me with the modern names of the places? Rope is Sparta, Thrace is well, Thrace. But Hill, Tower Hill, Sestos, Nestos, Cowland...HELP!?!?

The only one I remember is that Thought is Athens. The first book doesn't have a map either. And knowing Greek wouldn't help, because Latro gets some of the names wrong (I remember Wolfe saying, for example, that he mistranslates Athens as Thought)

- 3) Is this the third book out yet? I don't think it's in paperback, but in hardcover?

There may not be a third book. Wolfe says he just plans to write them whenever he feels the interest. They're going to be a kind of walking tour of ancient Greece.

- 4) Who else besides me likes this series better than the New Sun series (though honestly, I haven't read "Urth of the New Sun" yet).

It's a tough call...I liked this series better the first time I read it. However, I just re-read the Book of the New Sun last summer, and enjoyed it more than I had before. Now I'll have to re-read

Soldier of the Mists to find out :-).

Gavin Steyn

Dan Tilque — 19 Aug 1992, 10:33 · follows Gavin Steyn

2) I don't have the first book, and the second doesn't come with a map, so can somebody help me with the modern names of the places? Rope is Sparta, Thrace is well, Thrace. But Hill, Tower Hill, Sestos, Nestos, Cowland...HELP!?!?

The only one I remember is that Thought is Athens.

If I remember correctly, Tower Hill is Corinth. If not then Hill is.

The first book doesn't have a map either.

But it has a glossary.

There may not be a third book. Wolfe says he just plans to write them whenever he feels the interest. They're going to be a kind of walking tour of ancient Greece.

When I found out that it was a tour, I lost interest in the story. After reading *Soldier in the Mist*, I thought it was a modern version of a Greek tragedy. The premise of the story certainly seems like that's what it should be. But Arete doesn't advance this aspect at all. He just keeps wandering around Greece.

Dan Tilque

Thomas Duffey — 19 Aug 1992, 16:07 · follows Dan Tilque

dant at techbook.com (Dan Tilque) writes:

If I remember correctly, Tower Hill is Corinth. If not then Hill is.

Yes, Tower Hill is Corinth. Hill is Thebes, Sestos is Sestos, Nestos I don't remember being in the book, Cowland is Boetia, Goodcattle Island is Euboea (sp?), Bearland is Arcadia (another example of mistranslation, I believe), the Hot Gates are Thermopylae, Redface Island is the Peloponnese, Riverland is Egypt (obviously so, in *Soldier of Arete*) and that's all I can remember off the top of my head.

I too enjoyed these books a great deal, and reading them sparked an interest in ancient history when I tried to track down the events described within the books.

Tom Duffey