

Gene Wolfe: Nightside the Long Sun

The SF-Lovers list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 23 Mar 1993

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Laurence R. Brothers — 23 Mar 1993, 15:09

I just purchased and read the latest Gene Wolfe opus "Nightside the Long Sun".

The cover blurb babbles about it being more in the "Book of the New Sun" world. It may well be in the same universe (well, the same multiverse :-), but don't worry about it succumbing to sequelitis...

In this book at least, the only real identification with the former series was Wolfe's gimmick of using dislocated modifications of usages from other languages for the names of culturally significant concepts, places, and things. This time, though there are multiple sources, the primary source for the local culture seems to be a sort of modification of Spanish usages.

The book really has nothing whatsoever to do with the "Book of the New Sun" world, plot, or characters, so far as I can tell.

Without giving anything away, let me just say that I liked it a lot; it's the best book of the year so far as I'm concerned. I should also add that I read it in about 3 hours. If I can find any flaw at all in Wolfe's style over the course of his career, it's that some of his writing is difficult to read; its intricacy can make it a little tough on the reader. I still haven't figured out some of the stories in "The Isle of Doctor Death and Other Stories and Other Stories", much as I like the title. However, I found "Nightside the Long Sun" completely lucid and pellucid... A true pleasure to read.

One caveat: even more so than the books in the "Book of the New Sun", this book is really just an episode in a larger multi-book novel. Don't expect a full resolution of the plot by the end. On the other hand, don't avoid the book for that reason; it's not as if it ends on a cliffhanger.

Laurence R. Brothers
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Dan Rabin — 23 Mar 1993, 15:57 · follows Laurence R. Brothers

I concur with Laurence R. Brothers's favorable report on Gene Wolfe's new Nightside the Long Sun, and congratulate him on his reading speed: 333 pages in 3 hours! It took me more like 8 hours.

Gene Wolfe followers will probably like this one. The third-person narrative is very clean and readable, and Wolfe's impeccably timed rationing of background information is much in evidence.

Can't wait for the next one.

Dan Rabin