

Gene Wolfe - When's the Next Book Due?

The SF-Lovers list — 11 messages, 8 voices, 03 Feb 1994

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Barbarisi — 03 Feb 1994, 23:39

Does anyone out there know when the next installment in Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun, entitled Calde of the Long Sun, will be published?

I highly recommend the first two installments of this epic novel, Nightside of the Long Sun and Lake of the Long Sun. I say this partially out of selfishness, for I want Mr. Wolfe's books to sell well so he is encouraged to continue writing. I have noticed that few bookstores keep his titles in stock. Why is this so?

Back to the Long Sun books... I believe that SF fans whose tastes lean towards "hard SF" will find this story more accessible than some of Wolfe's previous works. I hesitate to cite examples, because that would be telling, and a big part of the fun of a Wolfe novel comes from how he shows his worlds. You see the world through the eyes of a priest named Silk, who does not know the true nature of his world. Impelled by an "Outsider", he is bound to a course which may lead him to understand his world and its place in the universe. There is a mix of high and low technology in this world, and most of the high technology is recognized as being the work of people (as opposed to gods). The characters are fully drawn. The pacing of the story increases steadily as the plot unfolds. Wolfe stuns the mind's eye with the images he weaves with words.

I encourage readers to bear with Wolfe's use of archaic nomenclature - usually you can deduce meaning by context. A glossary would be helpful.

Marco C. Barbarisi
marco at email.ncsc.navy.mil

Pat McMurray — 05 Feb 1994, 10:15 · follows Barbarisi

marco at EMAIL.NCSC.NAVY.MIL writes:

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I agree very strongly with your recommendAtion. Nightside is available in the UK as a paperback and may be the best fiver you'll ever spend. Lake is available in the UK as a hardback or a US import. IMHO he is not widely stocked because he doesn't sell well, and I think this is because a lot of his work is very literary and inaccessible. Anybody who has troubles with Shadow Of the Torturer is going to make even less headway with Free, Live Free or there are doors. However notwithstanding the Long Sun stuff is more open than most and will repay reading.

Pat McMurray

P Nielsen Hayden — 05 Feb 1994, 13:33 · follows Pat McMurray

marco at email.ncsc.navy.mil writes:

Does anyone out there know when the next installment in Gene Wolfe's _Book of the Long Sun_, entitled _Calde' of the Long Sun_, will be published?

This fall; it's been delivered, and he's working on the fourth, EXODUS FROM THE LONG SUN.

I have noticed that few bookstores keep [Wolfe's] titles in stock. Why is this so?

Well, it isn't so, although it may be in the particular bookstores you've been looking at. Quite the contrary, very few SF authors have as much of their backlist in print as Gene Wolfe. (And more backlist coming: this spring, we bring THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS back in the Orb line, and we just bought the rights to DEVIL IN A FOREST and PEACE.)

The belief that Gene Wolfe doesn't sell qualifies, I suspect, as one of the great urban legends of modern SF. I can't speak for the British market (another poster, pat at cooky.demon.co.uk, claims that "IMHO he is not widely stocked because he doesn't sell well", but I note that British publishers keep bringing Wolfe's work out) but, in the US, Gene Wolfe could serve as the illustration next to the dictionary entry for "successful midlist author."

I suppose that as a publisher I should keep quiet about this - why give Ellen Key Harris ideas? :) but, I can't stand to see Gene misrepresented like this.

Patrick Nielsen Hayden
senior editor
Tor Books

Pat McMurray — 05 Feb 1994, 18:10 · follows P Nielsen Hayden

P Nielsen Hayden, pnh at panix.com writes:

(another poster, pat at cooky.demon.co.uk, claims that "IMHO he is not widely stocked because he doesn't sell well", but I note that British publishers keep bringing Wolfe's work out) but, in the US, Gene Wolfe could serve

May I make two qualifications to that statement?

Firstly my statement really applies to his works apart from the Book of the new sun which is always available, but it can be hard to find his other work

Secondly I think it's a real shame he's a successful midlist author, he deserves to be much better known. (Don't quote this out of context:-)) Honestly what I really meant is that though yes you do always find Gene's works in a bookstore, there's never enough.

Pat McMurray

Chun-Wai Chan — 05 Feb 1994, 19:02 · follows Pat McMurray

pnh at panix.com (P Nielsen Hayden) writes:

marco at email.ncsc.navy.mil writes:

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I am very glad that "The Devil In A Forest" and "Peace" will be in print again. I have the first in an British paper back and the latter in two old used Berkeleys. I'd like to get Peace in one of limited edition hard covers - I enjoyed it that much.

I saw Operation Ares in hard back at Stars Our Destination, but since even Wolfe considered it a so-so first published novel, I wanted to try it in paperback first. Any chances that Tor will bring it back or has it done so already?

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I think Wolfe is an author who sells in decent quantities, not huge, year after year. It's true that almost all his stuff is still in print. It's a credit to the spec. fic. market that authors like Wolfe do sell for three decades, a slap in the face of the NY Times Rev. Of Books highbrows who despise all "genre" fiction as worthlessly ephemeral. A lot of SF authors (such as Piers Anthony) take up a lot more rack space, but they turn out a lot more and appeal to an slightly different audience for whom SF is more casual fun reading.

I suspect that Terry Brooks or David Eddings sell more volumes per year than LOTR, but LOTR has been going for 5 decades now.

myong — 06 Feb 1994, 12:03 · follows Chun-Wai Chan

marco at email.ncsc.navy.mil writes:

Does anyone out there know when the next installment in Gene Wolfe's _Book of the Long Sun_, entitled _Calde_ of the Long Sun_, will be published?

Not too long ago, someone "in the know" posted that _Calde_ has been submitted to the publishers and that Wolfe had begun work on the fourth book (Is this to be another tetralogy?). I suspect _Calde_ will be released about this time next year.

I'm about 2/3 of the way through _Lake_, and I've found it to be entertaining but less subtle than _Book of the New Sun_ or the _Soldier of the Mist_ (still looking for _Arete_ ; grumble). Those other works may require more work from the reader, but the "payoff" was well worth it, IMHO.

P Nielsen Hayden — 06 Feb 1994, 16:16 · follows myong

jvessey at husc9.harvard.edu (Jonathan Vessey) writes:

I've heard that the Book of the New Sun is out of print. Is this the case and, if so, why and are there any plans to re-release it?

We acquired North American rights to The Book of the New Sun after S&S/Pocket reverted it last year, and will release it in two trade paperback omnibuses under the Orb imprint in the fall of 1994, to be entitled SHADOW AND CLAW and SWORD AND CITADEL.

Patrick Nielsen Hayden
senior editor

Tor Books

Mark T Pitcavage — 06 Feb 1994, 20:48 · follows P Nielsen Hayden

I can't recommend `_Operation Ares_`. In most respects you would not even believe that Gene Wolfe wrote it.

Aaron V. Humphrey — 08 Feb 1994, 21:57 · follows Mark T Pitcavage

In people's opinion, is it necessary to read `_The Urth of The New Sun_` before starting the Book of the Long Sun? Yes, I've read the Book of the New Sun; I was given to understand that `_Urth_` is between the two series, but I haven't been able to find it anywhere (is it still in print? I may have to order it if it `_is_` necessary)...

P Nielsen Hayden — 09 Feb 1994, 18:29 · follows Aaron V. Humphrey

aaron at amisk.cs.ualberta.ca (Aaron V. Humphrey) writes:

In people's opinion, is it necessary to read `_The Urth of The New Sun_` before starting the Book of the Long Sun?

Not in the slightest.

Patrick Nielsen Hayden

senior editor

Tor Books

Brian McElhinney — 10 Feb 1994, 06:48 · follows P Nielsen Hayden

myong at flute.aix.calpoly.edu () wrote:

Wolfe has also begun a new series, The Book of the Long Sun, which is allegedly related to the New Sun books, though the relationship is unclear so far.

Seems pretty clear to me. Am I missing something?

1) It's printed on the book cover.

2) - SPOILER - The two-headed ruler, who came to power incredibly quickly, is named Typhon. Which also describes the Typhon in the New Sun books.

I think Typhon even made a passing comment to Severian about sending ships out, though I could be hallucinating.

IMHO, the Long Sun is entertaining but not as subtle as the New Sun.

I was kind of uncomfortable about how "painfully obvious" some things appeared to be in NIGHTSIDE and LAKE. But I wonder if I'm not just overly sensitive to Wolfe's penchant for hiding relationships. Not everyone I've talked to appreciates Wolfe's subtlety!

Brian McElhinney