

Wolfe's NEW SUN (was Rhialto the Marvellous - Jack Vance)

The SF-Lovers list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 22 May 1998

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Mike Berro — 22 May 1998, 17:25

aleistra at Ieland.Stanford.EDU (Andrea Lynn Leistra) wrote:
Advice: Never read the _Book of the New Sun_. It's an amazingly wonderful piece of literature, but - gasp - you will not know all the words in it. And neither will your dictionary, unless your dictionary is the OED. (They *are* all real words, just very obscure ones).

I am really upset that I did not like the New Sun books (I read the first four.) I was so sure that I would, based on the recommendations of people who like Vance, that I spent large sums on the first editions (a fetish of mine), giving me an even greater incentive. It just didn't do it for me.

The writing was very good, enough to get me through the four books, but unlike Vance, who (in at least some of his novels) never makes a pretense of telling a grand story, I felt in the SUN books that there was a subplot (or twelve) that was kept hidden from me, and never resolved. Perhaps they are resolved in the sequels, but I don't enjoy being kept in the dark for so long. Perhaps I missed the resolution (although I did understand all of the words.) If I'm just imagining a subplot, then my opinion of the book is even worse. Overall, it seems a "portentious" book, with little resolution of the portents. With Vance, each chapter is a delight (even when he is describing tortures), so that the payoffs are almost immediate.

Mike Berro

Kevin J. Maroney — 22 May 1998, 23:15 · follows Mike Berro

mikeb at massmedia.com (Mike Berro) wrote:
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<MASSIVE SPOILER>

What, the story of a young torturer's apprentice growing up, becoming king, wrestling Satan, and evolving into God isn't grand enough?

And in the sequel, he both saves and destroys the world.

Kevin Maroney