

# Review: Strange Travelers by Gene Wolfe

The SF-Lovers list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 19 Feb 2000

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Aaron M. Renn — 19 Feb 2000, 18:54

Strange Travelers by Gene Wolfe

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Conclusion: Recommended

This is a solid collection of Gene Wolfe short stories. They are a diverse lot, having only excellence in common. I'll admit that I'm really not a big fan of short fiction, but the recent collections I've read are starting to convert me.

My readings of Wolfe consist of only this collection and the recent "On Blue's Waters," so I obviously don't have a lot of experience upon which to judge things. However, I'm starting to get the impression that Wolfe has a certain shall we say motif that is common to much of his work. This consists of a high tech setting, perhaps during or after some type of societal fall, but one in which the characters do not fully comprehend the true nature of things such that the technology appears almost magical. This could be because the character is a child, or is living in a post-tech future, or because the technology is so advanced that there is no need for humans to really try to know it. There also seems to be a certain similarity in his lead characters, especially those who narrate their own tales, though I've not really pinned this down exactly. I don't suggest that these similarities are bad, or make his stories seem like clones because they don't. I'm just speculating on things based on what I've read to date and I needed something to say in this review besides "It's great!"

One interesting thing to note is that Wolfe does not give cutesy intros to any of these stories. They stand alone and unadorned, which I liked a lot.

The only real downside of this book is the high hardcover price. This is not something so good that I feel it must be purchased in hardcover, or indeed at all. So don't be afraid to wait for the paperback if money is a constraint.

Author: Wolfe, Gene

Title: Strange Travelers

Publisher: Tor

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Order Info: ISBN 0-312-87227-5

Pages: 383 pp.

Comments: hardcover, US\$25.95

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Aaron M. Renn