

Gene Wolfe books about books

The SF-Lovers list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 29 Nov 1984

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Purtill — 29 Nov 1984, 22:53

Does anyone know of any easy (or possible) ways of
getting/ Gene Wolfe's THE CASTLE OF THE OTTER and/or PLAN[E]T ENGINEERING? As I understand it, both were put out by small presses in small quantities. I heard that the Science Fiction Book Club put out THE CASTLE OF THE OTTER. Is this true? Is it still available? (I.e., if I joined now, could I get it?)

Thanks in advance,

Mark Purtill
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Donn Seeley — 05 Dec 1984, 12:33 · follows Purtill

I don't have a line on purchasable copies of THE CASTLE OF THE OTTER or PLAN[E]T ENGINEERING, but a good place to start is with Mark Ziesing, publisher of OTTER and from whom I bought both books:

Mark V Ziesing
PO Box 806 (orders) or 762 Main St. (store)
Ziesing is a wonderful source of Wolfe books; apart from OTTER and PLAN[E]T, I've bought THE WOLFE ARCHIPELAGO, FREE LIVE FREE (both published by Mark), THE CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH, and just recently an autographed hardbound edition of THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS (a great book that has been afflicted with revolting cover art in its paperback editions). Even if Mark can't get you copies of these books, you might be able to find out from him where else they might be available now or in the future.

Here's some publication info on OTTER and PLAN[E]T:

THE CASTLE OF THE OTTER: A BOOK ABOUT The Book of the New Sun. Gene Wolfe. Ziesing Bros.: Willimantic CT, 1982. ISBN 0-917488-10-5, 0-917488-11-3 (signed ed.). 117 pp. Limited edition of 520 copies. Contains essays on the structure and symbolism of the novel, poetry, onomastics ('the study of names') and warfare; plus a glossary for SHADOW, an essay on writing, a collection of jokes told by characters from the novel, a history of the publishing of the novel and a Wolfe bibliography through 10/81, by Gordon Benson.

PLAN[E]T ENGINEERING. Gene Wolfe. NESFA Press: Box G MIT Branch P.O., Cambridge MA 02139-0910, 1984. ISBN 0-915368-25-0, 0-915368-83-8 (slipcased ed.). 155 pp. Limited edition of 1000 copies. Contains: Introduction by David Hartwell; 'Logology' (a foreword); 'The Books in THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN' (an essay); 'In Looking-Glass Castle', 'The Rubber Bend', 'The Marvelous Brass Chessplaying Automaton', 'When I was Ming the Merciless', 'The HORARS of War', 'A Criminal Proceeding' (a personal favorite), 'The Detective of Dreams' (all stories); 'British Soldier near Rapier Antiaircraft Missile Battery Scans for the Enemy', 'Last Night in the Garden of Forking Tongues' (about guess who?), 'The Computer Iterates the Greater Trumps'

(all poetry); and 'The Anatomy of a Robot', an article from PLANT ENGINEERING MAGAZINE.

I originally heard about Mark Ziesing and OTTER through sf-lovers,