

Free Live Free free recommend

The SF-Lovers list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 05 Nov 1986

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Randy Murray — 05 Nov 1986, 20:27

I just finished Gene Wolfe's Free Live Free. I tried for months to get a copy and the paperback just came out.

Now for my partially weird recommendation:

I liked it.

Hell, I enjoyed it.

But you (yes you) probably won't like it.

This is a book for those you love reading. I didn't say people who love science fiction, fantasy, etc . . . This is a book much like (although not at all like) Peace. If you can take a book and put it aside until you have the time, sit and relax, listen to the story (yes I mean listen), think, and most of all, not read too much at a time you might try Free Live Free. However, if you are the type that has to read something once it's in your hands and stay up till you drop, you may not care for this or any other of Wolfe's books.

Wolfe's writing is, for me, thought provoking and, well for lack of better words, soothing. I'm not a big enough snob about literature to read things just because someone says I should. I read what I want. Fortunately, the more I read, the more I want to know, so I end up wanting to read most things that people say I should. There are very few things I regret having wasted my time on.

On the other hand, while hungry for science fiction I find that I read a lot and sometimes go for long periods unsatisfied. I've heard some complain that Wolfe is too much work, but I really believe that this comes from that headlong rush to absorb plot and adventure. If you can sit by the fireside and dream away as the storyteller weaves his convoluted story, you may get something out of Wolfe's work.

I have his newest Soldier of the Mist, but I'm tempted just to hold it (though I doubt that I will) until the remainder is published.

Here's one final test: If you can read Godel, Escher, and Bach and I mean read it with enjoyment and understanding, then you MAY enjoy Wolfe.

No comments about intellect or taste, because frankly I don't put much stock in what some people will label them. Just don't bother with this book unless you are really inclined, not because someone told you that if you were smart and had good taste you would.

If you want to give Wolfe a short term and interesting trial read
The Island of Dr. Death and Other Stories and Other Stories.

Randal T. Murray
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Bruce Holloway — 06 Nov 1986, 16:34 · follows Randy Murray

rtm at cbosgd.ATT.COM (Randy Murray) writes:

If you want to give Wolfe a short term and interesting trial read
The Island of Dr. Death and Other Stories and Other Stories.

Or try "The Fourth Head of Cerberus".