

ENDANGERED SPECIES by Gene Wolfe

The SF-Lovers list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 26 Apr 1990

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Evelyn C. Leeper — 26 Apr 1990, 16:28

ENDANGERED SPECIES by Gene Wolfe

Tor, 1990 (1989c), ISBN 0-812-50718-5

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

This collection of thirty-four stories by one of the leading literary science fiction authors of today is billed on the cover as "one of the most important collections of the decade" (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION) and "the best single-author collection you will see this year" (ANALOG). For a change, the blurbs are not just hype.

First of all, this is a much larger collection than one usually sees - almost twice the usual number of stories. The result is that we can see a much wider range of Wolfe's talent than a normal-length collection would show us. Secondly, though all the stories have been previously published elsewhere, they are not what you would call readily available. For example, "Our Friend by Charles Dickens" appeared in ROOMS OF PARADISE edited by Lee Harding. Try finding that at your local Waldenbooks, or even Forbidden Planet!

Notable stories include the aforementioned "Our Neighbor by David Copperfield," an excellent story to give your friend who loves Dickens's style. "In the House of Gingerbread" is a wonderful twist and re-twist on the classic children's story; "The War Beneath the Tree" also takes an interesting turn at the end.

Unfortunately, even such a literary work as this is not free of typos; in "The God and His Man" the sword is named either "Maser" or "Master," depending on what sentence you're in.

These stories cover the range of science fiction, horror, and fantasy. My only quibble is the omission of "Slaves of Silver," Wolfe's foray into Sherlockiana, but that's a minor objection. If you're interested in seeing where science fiction concepts meet mainstream literary values, buy this book.

Evelyn C. Leeper

Jeff Fabijanic — 27 Apr 1990, 14:42 · follows Evelyn C. Leeper

Unfortunately, even such a literary work as this is not free of typos; in "The God and His Man" the sword is named either "Maser" or "Master," depending on what sentence you're in.

I went back and read this story to make sure, and I think that the change was intentional. The sword is "Master" (which, considering the story, is pretty true) and it is also a maser - that is, it behaves more powerfully than a simple sword, the implication being that it is a high powered energy weapon of some sort.

But then again, maybe they **are** just typos...;*)

Jeff