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The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 05 Jan 1999

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Alice Turner — 05 Jan 1999, 20:35

Stephen et al,

Michael Straight wrote :

This sounds like it was inspired by a novel from the mid 1800's by Wilkie Collins called The Moonstone, which T.S. Eliot called "the first and greatest of English detective novels" (it introduced the idea of giving the reader all the clues necessary to solve the mystery and of having a "detective" to put it all together). It features chapters written by each of the witnesses to the crime. I don't know if they contradict each other, as, alas, I haven't read it yet.

A quick recommendation of The Moonstone. I love Wilkie Collins' fiction and perhaps this is the best of his novels, with a wonderful complex plot and great characters (the detective Sgt. Cuff is great) and a marvelous sense of place this is of interest to Wolfe fans. As far as I can recall the Chapters written by various characters do not contradict each other they move the plot on seamlessly and are only written by divers hands because some of the narrators are not on hand to describe all of the events.

I too think The Moonstone holds up wonderfully well, especially considering what a pioneer it was, 1868, decades before the great adventure fiction of the end of the century. And I'll recommend Incident of the Fingerpost too, with one caveat: it is awfully long, and ones attention (mine, anyway) does tend to wander at times, so that it becomes a bit of a slog. But clever and atmospheric and amusing.

-alga