

Of Flagging Talent and Fairies

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 28 Mar 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2169>

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Christy — 28 Mar 2000, 16:35

Hello Urth list, I have a question for you:

I've just finished **Strange Travelers** with "The Ziggurat," and have been generally dissatisfied with the content (does anyone else here feel the same? I haven't picked that up), save for the adaptation of "Koschei the Deathless." I feel the list is well-suited to answer the question-- what is the deal with Andrew Lang's fairy books? Could you spell it out for this hapless Yankee? I know there is a long, colorful series never to be referenced by Borges-- are they good, one moreso than the next, order, is there a big boxed set the likes of which I can pick up in the Qesque shelf above all the regular pulpy fiction? I feel like not knowing about Lang is like a hole in my life.

Christy

William H. Ansley — 29 Mar 2000, 00:09 · follows Christy

Christy wrote:

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Christy,

It's interesting that you should write this. I was just thinking along the same lines. I didn't enjoy *_Strange Travelers_* nearly as much as Wolfe's earlier collections. I think it's less a matter of "flagging talent" than that Wolfe is putting more of his energy into his novels and less into his short stories. I suspect that he continues to write at shorter lengths because he can express ideas that wouldn't fit into his novels. But I feel he is becoming overly self-indulgent in his short works. In his earlier collections there were a considerably higher percentage of stories that could be enjoyed without first having to be decoded.

"The Death of Koschei the Deathless" was my favorite story, too. As far as Lang's Fairy books go, I highly enjoyed all I have read, and I have read several. I really don't remember exactly how many it was and some of them I read long ago, but I recently started re-reading them

on-line. You can find most of them if you do a search on "lang andrew" at the On-Line Books Page <<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/>>.

If you don't like reading lengthy texts on a computer screen, most of the Fairy books seem to be in print. I saw at least a dozen titles on Amazon.com. Try your favorite on-line bookseller or Bookfinder.com <<http://www.bookfinder.com/>> if you want to try used copies. I don't know of any boxed set, but it is certainly a good idea; if I find that such a thing is available, I'll let you know.

William Ansley