

FREE LIVE FREE

The Urth list — 7 messages, 5 voices, 24 Sep 1997

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/217>

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Michael Straight — 24 Sep 1997, 11:39

Spoilers ho!

I asked this question a few weeks ago, but perhaps I was so brief that no one knew what I was talking about.

Mr. Free tells the salesman that he hid the device "under a sign." On the last page, after the salesman has retrieved his son and rejoined the others (who seem to have already been "improved" by the time machine), the salesman sees the sign, and it seems that Wolfe intends readers to say "Ah-ha! That's what Mr. Free meant."

I did not say "Ah-ha!" and would like to very much. What is the sign? Any help would be received with gratitude.

I really enjoyed this book and found it to be Wolfe's most humorous novel (right up there with his robot detective stories, in my book).

-Rostrum

Michael Bowman — 24 Sep 1997, 09:47 · follows Michael Straight

I've got a question on this novel. I've heard the Zeising edition is different from the Tor edition. Is this true? And if so, in what way?

Michael Bowman
bvmi at odin.cc.pdx.edu

m.driussi — 24 Sep 1997, 20:27 · follows Michael Bowman

Reply: Item #7562733 from URTH at LISTS.BEST.COM@INTERNET#

Michael Bowman,

From URTH-MAN EXTRAORDINARY:

"B15. FREE LIVE FREE

"Ziesing (hb) 1-8, 12-84, 496pp, \$45.00 . . . "

"Tor (hb) 93248-0, 11-85, 403pp, \$16.95 . . . "

Textual Variations

"P1. FREE LIVE FREE

"About 4000 words were dropped from the Zeising edition, including one chapter. The order of the other chapters

was changed slightly and a chronology was added as end matter (this latter dropped in the UK editions)."

=mantis=

Michael Bowman — 24 Sep 1997, 14:54 · follows m.driussi

On Wed, 24 Sep 1997 m.driussi at genie.com wrote:
Reply: Item #7562733 from URTN at LISTS.BEST.COM@INTERNET#

Textual Variations

"P1. FREE LIVE FREE
"About 4000 words were dropped from the Zeising edition, including one chapter. The order of the other chapters was changed slightly and a chronology was added as end matter (this latter dropped in the UK editions)."

=mantis=

Wow. That's a pretty major difference between editions. It sounds like it would be worthwhile to get ahold of the Zeising edition. Thanks.

Michael Bowman
bvmi at odinc.c.pdx.edu

m.driussi — 25 Sep 1997, 00:59 · follows Michael Bowman

Reply: Item #9690381 from URTN at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET00#

Michael Bowman,

Re: the different editions, from Clute's STROKES:

"Even the limited edition of the book [FREE LIVE FREE] . . . was so clear and compulsive in the telling that it could be read at one long go. Slightly sharpened at points . . . and shorn of the dithery Chapter 43 of the original version, FREE LIVE FREE now flows with an unbroken liquid precision from this world to the last one, from dream to a magically-achieved reality" (p. 162).

=mantis=

Tony Ellis — 26 Sep 1997, 15:31 · follows m.driussi

RE>FREE LIVE FREE 26/09/97

I've just discovered this list, which looks like a lot of fun. Half my Wolfe books are at my old address, however, so apologies in advance if I'm not the most frequent (or accurate) contributor.

Mr. Free tells the salesman that he hid the device "under a sign." On the last page, after the salesman has retrieved his son and rejoined the others (who seem to have already been "improved" by the time machine), the salesman sees the sign, and it seems that Wolfe intends readers to say "Ah-ha! That's what Mr. Free meant."

It's years since I read this one from cover to cover, but I thought Free specifically said he that hid the device "in a wall" (although he certainly spoke of putting it under a sign as well). The way I remember the ending, it is this "in a wall" reference that Osgood recalls when he comes across the others, and the "Ah-ha" moment is when we realise that this means that the time machine is built into the front door of Free's house. Or am I making a complete fool of myself?

Somebody please put Rostrum and I out of our misery!

"About 4000 words were dropped from the Zeising edition, including one chapter. The order of the other chapters was changed slightly and a chronology was added as end matter (this latter dropped in the UK editions)."

Could some kind person send this chronology to the Urth-list for the benefit of benighted UK readers like me? I'm satisfied that I "understand" Free Live Free, but I never did get Ben Free's to-ing and fro-ing through time completely straightened out in my mind. And anyway, I'm curious.

Tony.

Derek Bell — 26 Sep 1997, 18:37 · follows Tony Ellis

In message <199709261528.IAA04849 at lists1.best.com>, Tony Ellis writes:

It's years since I read this one from cover to cover,

Same here.

The way I remember the ending, it is this "in a wall" reference that Osgood recalls when he comes across the others, and the "Ah-ha" moment is when we realise that this means that the time machine is built into the front door of Free's house.

I don't think you're making a fool of yourself at all; I think Wolfe said somewhere that some people hadn't realised the significance of some flowers that a character saw through a window. In fact, Wolfe implied that the flowers were blooming in the "wrong" season, that it's a different season outside the front of the house to the season seen through the window.

Could some kind person send this chronology to the Urth-list for the = benefit of benighted UK readers like me?

I agree, provided it does not anger the great god K'op-eeriit.

Tercel