

Old Stories

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 27 Apr 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2609>

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Alex David Groce — 27 Apr 2001, 16:42

Hey, how hard should I try to track down "Try and Kill It." Nov. 96 Asimov's, someone recently compared this to "The Ziggurat*" and claimed it was Wolfe in Faulkner territory in conversation; a quick net search reveals it was preliminary Nebula balloted that year, but wasn't in _Strange Travelers_ or reprinted elsewhere. Anyone on the list read it and think it was top-flight Wolfe?

The story "Copperhead" at sfsite is mildly interesting, but mostly strikes me as the kind of thing we usually get from Wolfe when he dips below novelette length. It might spark a few more Wolfe-misogyny debates.

* which for me says "high quality work indeed," though as we've seen YMMV.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

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Adam Stephanides — 28 Apr 2001, 10:32 · follows Alex David Groce

on 4/27/01 3:42 PM, Alex David Groce at Alex_Groce at gs246.sp.cs.cmu.edu wrote:

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You post inspired me to reread the story. While I liked it better the second time, I wouldn't call it top-flight Wolfe. I didn't much care for "The Ziggurat," actually, but "Try and Kill It" is much shorter (nineteen pages) and less thematically rich as far as I can tell. The protagonist is one of Wolfe's capable, manly men, which is probably my least favorite Wolfean type, although he's probably the most tolerable example of this type I've read. (If you are morally opposed to hunting, you probably won't like this story.) As far as Faulkner goes, it's not like any Faulkner I've read, which doesn't include the short stories; I suspect the perceived resemblance lies in the fact that it's about a man hunting an extraordinary bear. Wolfe's style is very good, but if there's more to the story than a well-written adventure story, I don't see it.

Incidentally, the issue in which "Try and Kill It" appeared has other items of interest besides Wolfe, most notably a novella by Gardner Dozois and Michael Swanwick. The bulk of it was written by Dozois (in the 60s), and my memory is that it's very good. It also contains Bruce Sterling's "Bicycle Repairman, and a Nancy Kress novelette, if you're a Kress fan.

--Adam