

The Devil In A Forest and St. Olaf of Norway

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 26 Aug 2002

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Josh Geller — 26 Aug 2002, 18:27

The Devil In A Forest is perhaps a minor work, but an extremely interesting one.

There's a hamlet in the woods, the woodcutters who are relics of a previous stage of civilization, a bandit who is a woodcutter aristocrat, a witch who knows the technology of the old civilization, megalithic ruins that are 'not a town' etc.

This is one of the most valuable books for people trying to understand the old civilization of Europe.

There's a story about King Olaf the Holy of Norway. See, it was generally known that he was a reincarnation of Olaf Geirstadtalf, who was buried in the mound at Geirstadt. There had been a prophecy to the effect, he had Olaf G.'s sword that came out of the mound etc. The problem was that St. Olaf was occupied with the forcible Christianization of Norway, and it sort of looked bad that a Christian king should be an incarnate elf. So they did a little stage play, where the King and some of his companions (who would also have been out of the mound, by the old way) went to Olaf G.'s mound on horseback and one of the companions asked the King if he didn't remember when they had been there before, and St. Olaf answered that it was not possible for a person to live more than once, because you lived once, died once and were resurrected once on the Last Day. Then he was overcome with emotion and rode away, because (in my view) what he was saying was so much at conflict with the reality.

Wolfe has a good grasp on all of this, as he shows in 'Devil' and also in the Latro books.

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Alice K. Turner — 27 Aug 2002, 01:09 · follows Josh Geller

----- Original Message -----

From: "Josh Geller" <dclxvi at dclxvi.best.vwh.net>
To: <urth at urth.net>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2002 2:27 PM
Subject: (urth) The Devil In A Forest and St. Olaf of Norway

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A much better novel, set at about the same time, same station, is -Morality Play- by Barry Unsworth. Recommended to this group.

-alga

Michael Straight — 27 Aug 2002, 01:32 · follows Alice K. Turner

On Mon, 26 Aug 2002, Alice K. Turner wrote:

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Seconded. Excellent book.

-Rostrum