

Wolfe story in Weird Tales

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 01 Jun 2003

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maa32 — 01 Jun 2003, 06:05

This months Weird Tales has a new Wolfe story, "My Name is Nancy Wood" I read it quickly in the bookstore, so here are some spoilers

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It is a first person account which purports to be a note found interred with a woman who has been dead for a century. According to a prefatory note from a doctor, she is exhumed because there is a suspicion that she was poisoned by a lover and died. The note says that Nancy Wood, the narrator, was transferred from a Sanatorium to a cardiac ward where she worked as a nurse. She had a patient who was a Reverend. He asks her to pray for him, and she eventually breaks down and does so sincerely. He says he doubts he will ever get back to St. Martha of the Wood, and she notes that he thinks she must be related somehow due to her name. He dies, then gets up and gets dressed. She takes him home and they make love. She takes him back to the hospital, where he is later found dead. He is rushed off to the morgue, but when he arrives there he is alive again, so he gets sent back. Nurse Wood begs her grandniece to bury her with pencil and paper in case the same thing should happen to her after she dies. The Reverend was married, so their affair was adulterous. It ends with a disclaimer from the present day doctor, who doubts that the note was really written in the grave.

Ok, here's my best shot at this one: the Reverend may have had some kind of medication that induced the old false death of Romeo and Juliet fame. He took it as a scam to win people over to his church and beliefs, and he used it to get Nurse Wood in bed. It may have stopped his heart for a while or something. Maybe his wife was poisoning him with it for infidelities. Perhaps Nancy Wood was introduced to the same drug, through the jealous wife or by threatening to continue their affair or make it public after he returned to life. However, I figure she would probably have been embalmed, so there might be a much more mystical explanation than that, instead of my rather ordinary drug idea. I suppose I should look up the significance of Martha of the Wood right now. Just some initial impressions; I don't know if anyone else has read it.

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