

Quotable Wolfe

The Urth list — 7 messages, 6 voices, 19 May 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4604>

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Kieran Mullen — 19 May 2006, 20:08

One thing I love about Wolfe is his prose. His choice of words, their cadence, their compact power. OTOH, I can't think of many quotes off the top of my head. I am not sure Wolfe **is** quotable. It's more the tapestry than the thread.

Do people have:

Favorite Severian quotes?

Favorite Wolfe quotes?

I do have some favorite quotes, but they're from short stories. I'll have to get my copy of "Endangered Species" instead of trying to cobble them from memory.

Kieran

maru dubshinki — 20 May 2006, 03:27 · in reply to Kieran Mullen

On 5/19/06, Kieran Mullen <kieran at ou.edu> wrote:

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Kieran

Well, I always was struck by one quote from Shadow of the Torturer: as a matter of fact, I first came to Wolfe when I was a kid, and I was casually browsing the first chapters of this odd looking book, and I read this:

"We believe that we invent symbols. The truth is that they invent us; we are their creatures, shaped by their hard, defining edges. When soldiers take their oath they are given a coin, an asimi stamped with the profile of the Autarch. Their acceptance of that coin is their acceptance of the special duties and burdens of military life--they are soldiers from that moment, though they may know nothing of the management of arms. I did not know that then, but it is a

profound mistake to believe that we must know of such things to be influenced by them, and in fact to believe so is to believe in the most debased and superstitious kind of magic. The would-be sorcerer alone has faith in the efficacy of pure knowledge; rational people know that things act of themselves or not at all." The Shadow of the Torturer, Gene Wolfe.

(Thanks to Lupine Nuncio (<http://mysite.verizon.net/~vze2tmhh/wolfeblog.html>) for providing a transcription!)

~maru

b sharp — 20 May 2006, 03:55 · follows maru dubshinki

I think examples of Wolfian humor are especially effective because they are so rare and widely spaced and inevitably droll. 5th Head is so damned dark and foreboding I think there may be no examples. BotNS has a few such as:

Jolenta: "there's fruit if you want it. The doctor had me save some last night so we'd have >something for breakfast"

Severian: "Yes, I'd like some fruit. That's very kind of you"

Jolenta: "I won't get it for you, you'll have to fetch it yourself. It's there behind that stand of >armor" "I'd like something too. Those grapes I think"

Autarch: "A little adultery never hurt any man. Unless of course it was his wife's"

Nod: "What news is there?"

Second Demon: "All you want sieur." "We've searched the garden so often that if only we'd been carrying dung instead of spears, the daisies'd be as big as umbrellas. Ducks' clothes is down and hopes is up- so's the turnips. Tomorrow should be fair, warm and bright.....(new sun)"

The Butcher: "I have seen dead wolves"

She-Wolf: "Yes, and eaten their flesh, though it were too foul for the flies, I dare say. It may be you shall eat mine, if a falling tree kill me."

Dr. Talos: " You remember to be on your good behavior now. They don't like to be called >cacogens, you know. Address them as whatever it is they say their names are this time, and >don't refer to slime."

Baldanders: "These things only live a score of years, like dogs"

My favorite is toward the end after four books of continual explaining that "fuligin is the color which is..."

Severian: " Soon I must don robes of argent, the color that is more pure than white. Never mind"

-bsharp

pthwndxrc1zp — 20 May 2006, 07:04 · in reply to b sharp

This passage always brings a big smile to my face:

"It is a gambling proposition," Dr. Talos explained. "And I confess to loving them. The money in the hat is a sure thing--by the close of the first act I can predict to an orichalk how much it will be. But the dropsies! They may be no more than two apples and a turnip, or as much as the imagination can encompass. We have found a baby pig. Delicious, so Baldanders told me when he ate it. We have found a baby baby. We have found a gold-headed stick, and I retain it..."

On 5/19/06, b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Bob Miller — 20 May 2006, 10:30 · in reply to maru dubshinki

Did I miss it? The one, and rare, to me is that scene in BOTNS where Severian found the bush of "Claws". "...and I cast away my boots that I might not walk shod on sacred ground"

the "things" that stick to my memory of Wolfe's are those that have had a buildup. The scene in THE WIZARD where Idnn tells Sirable that the wives of the Angrborn are her subjects and so she Will take care of them. And then I wished I were not mounted, that I might kneel to her.

Thank you all for forcing me to codify my thoughts on this. Bob

From: "maru dubshinki" <marudubshinki at gmail.com> Reply-To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net> Subject: Re: (urth) Quotable Wolfe Date: Fri, 19 May 2006 23:27:49 -0400

On 5/19/06, Kieran Mullen <kieran at ou.edu> wrote:

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Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2006, 20:46 · in reply to pthwndxrclzp

pthwndxrclzp wrote:

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This sounds more likely to be the source of the boy in the tower than Severian's loins.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

Kieran Mullen — 05 Jun 2006, 22:34 · follows Jeff Wilson

I promised to enter a few of my favorite Wolfe quotes. The sources are obvious, so I'll omit them :-)

"I destroyed the Dream-Master as He has been sacrificed so often, devouring His white, wheaten flesh that we might all possess life without end.
Dear people, dream on."

"And so I have proceeded, step by laborous (delightful) step, chapter by chapter, until soon, perhaps this very year, surely before the coronation, I will begin the preface."

Kieran Mullen