

An Evil Guest (spoiler free)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 14 Sep 2008

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don doggett — 14 Sep 2008, 02:53

Hi everyone,

I just finished the book today, so I thought I throw out a short little review. It's on the fly, so forgive any stumbling.

Within the first few pages of *An Evil Guest*, Wolfe lays down a challenge to the reader: What is evil? In typical Wolfean fashion it's oblique, couched in a conversational digression between the main character and the President of the U.S. Nevertheless, it's there, and it is to the credit of the novel that at the end I am unable to answer the question. "good" characters do troubling things and "bad" characters behave in reasonable and sympathetic ways. In truth there are no good or bad guys of the type we're trained to expect in a pulp novel. And this is a pulp novel, from the cover to the last page. It riffs on Lovecraft, *The Circus of Dr. Lao* (absolute required reading before or after reading this book), *King Kong*, *The Shadow*, and god knows what else. It's also the best novel he's written since the *Short Sun* books. I mean, I've enjoyed *Wizard Knight*, *Soldier of Sidon*, and *Pirate Freedom*, but they've basically been the same book-cryptic, first person, borderline prosylitic puzzle boxes whose most obvious concern has been suborning paganism to Judeo-Christianity. Here, Wolfe has returned to the third person and stepped away from the pulpit. It's a nice change and probably the best Lovecraft story I've read other than *A Study in Emerald*. This is a wonderful novel.

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>