

Wolfe's Out-of-Print Novels

The Urth list — 9 messages, 7 voices, 10 Oct 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5174>

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Matthew Keeley — 10 Oct 2008, 15:41

I just realized that I've now read all but three of Wolfe's currently-available novels. Though I have a few short story collections still to read, I'm not sure what Wolfe I should read once I finish with those (Yes, of course, I could always re-read). Which of Wolfe's out-of-print books are most worth tracking down? How would you rank the books in terms of quality? (My best guess is below)

The Devil in a Forest (best?)
Castlevision
Free Live Free
Pandora by Holly Hollander
Operation Ares (worst?)

Thanks for the help.

-Matt

Mo Holkar / UKG — 10 Oct 2008, 15:52 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

At 16:41 10/10/2008, you wrote:
The Devil in a Forest (best?)
Castlevision
Free Live Free
Pandora by Holly Hollander
Operation Ares (worst?)

I haven't read Operation ARES, but for the others I would personally rank them:

Free Live Free (best)
Castlevision
The Devil in a Forest
Pandora by Holly Hollander

in terms of their depth, thought-provokingness, delving into Wolfean themes, etc.

All are well worth reading though!

best,

Mo

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WolfeWiki now at:
<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/>

Tim Walters — 10 Oct 2008, 15:54 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

Matthew Keeley wrote:

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rank the books in terms of quality? (My best guess is below)

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I would swap Castlevision and Free Live Free, but other than that you've captured my opinion exactly.

Tim Walters | The Doubtful Palace | <http://doubtfulpalace.com>

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 10 Oct 2008, 16:05 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

On Fri, Oct 10, 2008 at 8:41 AM, Matthew Keeley

<matthew.keeley.1@gmail.com>wrote:

The Devil in a Forest (best?)
Castlevision
Free Live Free
Pandora by Holly Hollander
Operation Ares (worst?)

I didn't realize that these were all out of print! I knew "Ares" was, and Wolfe has more or less vowed that it will never be reprinted. Too bad, because it's actually better (imho) than one of the others...

Free Live Free (best)
Castlevision
The Devil in a Forest
Operation Areas
Pandora, by Holly Hollander

-- the last being the only Wolfe novel I don't think I'll ever reread.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I once absend-mindedly ordered Three Mile Island dressing in a restaurant and, with great presence of mind, they brought Thousand Island Dressing and a bottle of chili sauce. -- T. Pratchett

don doggett — 11 Oct 2008, 01:26 · in reply to Mo Holkar / UKG

Devil in a Forest was a bit disappointing to me, mainly because I couldn't help comparing it to Barry Unsworth's Morality Play, which is incredible.

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

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

--- On Fri, 10/10/08, Mo Holkar / UKG <lists@ukg.co.uk> wrote: From: Mo Holkar / UKG <lists@ukg.co.uk>

ukg.co.uk> Subject: Re: (urth) Wolfe's Out-of-Print Novels To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net> Date: Friday, October 10, 2008, 8:52 AM

At 16:41 10/10/2008, you wrote:
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Matthew Keeley — 11 Oct 2008, 02:05 · in reply to don doggett

On Fri, Oct 10, 2008 at 9:26 PM, don doggett <kingwukong at yahoo.com> wrote:
Devil in a Forest was a bit disappointing to me, mainly because I couldn't help comparing it to Barry Unsworth's Morality Play, which is incredible.

Don

That does look interesting, based off your take on it and the Amazon description.

This list just exacerbates my book-buying habits, but I love it anyway. Thanks for the implicit recommendation.

Is there a section on the WolfeWiki suggesting other books Wolfe fans might like? I know there was quite a long thread on that subject here recently, and I'd be especially curious to see what non-sf writers get recommended. I just finished Muriel Spark's The Ballad of Peckham Rye, and it struck me as something some Wolfe fans would really like. I certainly thought it was great.

-Matt

Nigel Price — 11 Oct 2008, 10:57 · follows Matthew Keeley

I enjoyed all the novels on the out-of-print list - even "Operation Ares", which Wolfe himself doesn't seem to rate. All right, it's not a masterpiece, but there are early appearances of several distinctive Lupine themes (from memory - alien animals naturalised on Earth as TBotNs and rebellion as in TBotLS) and a deep strangeness that I very much enjoyed.

"Pandora by Holly Hollander" is a fine piece of work, a pastiche and inversion of the Nancy Drew novels with an assured use of a young female narrative voice that is relatively unusual (unique?) in the Lupine canon.

"The Devil in a Forest" is also excellent, a well-written and accomplished account of adolescent discovery that hovers on the boundaries of historical fiction and fantasy.

"Free Live Free" and "Castlevue" seem uneven to me, the former having its longueurs while the latter seems overly rushed and compressed. They're both very definitely worth reading, though "Free" might have been better shorter and "Castlevue" longer.

The completist in me says you really ought to try and read them all!

Nigel

James Crossley — 11 Oct 2008, 17:59 · in reply to don doggett

Not for nothing, I agree with you about the Unsworth book. A great example of a short novel that's not a bit longer than it needs to be.

James

On 10/10/08 6:26 PM, "don doggett" <kingwukong at yahoo.com> wrote:
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Mo Holkar / UKG — 13 Oct 2008, 10:56 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

At 03:05 11/10/2008, you wrote:

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There isn't at the moment, but please do add one -- that would be great.

(Also, I'd like to third the recommendation of Morality Play -- there's a film of it too, called The Reckoning: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0258816/> which bears about the same relation as the The Name of the Rose film to its book, ie. it gives the story and the rough idea but is rather lacking.)

best,

Mo

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