

Sorcerer's House: First Impressions *spoilage*

The Urth list — 13 messages, 10 voices, 05 Apr 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5577>

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 05 Apr 2010, 15:36

I'm writing this up before reading any of the stuff that's come over the list, which I've kept isolated in a folder of its own.

I finished TSH yesterday and it seemed to me remarkably free of "Huh?"s. By which I mean, by the end of the book I think Wolfe cleared up most if not all of the mysteries pretty, uh, clearly. By the time we find out who Bax's birth-parents are, the rest seems pretty straightforward.

Straightforward for Wolfe, that is...

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Craig Brewer — 05 Apr 2010, 15:43 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

John Clute's review just appeared in NYRSF (alongside yours of The Long Man, so this is probably not news to you in particular), and his reaction was remarkably similar!

Since I just read it a few minutes ago, I have it at hand. His summary: "...I believe in Baxter Dunn... Because I wanted a Wolfe novel to read in a single sitting without escaping us utterly, and that by virtue of that single sitting love might be conveyed: Wolfe's love of telling, the love of the main characters of House for each other, the love felt by the reader for a book whose author may, for once in his life, have told a tall tale around the campfire. I believed every word of it."

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

From: Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Sent: Mon, April 5, 2010 10:36:08 AM

Subject: (urth) Sorcerer's House: First Impressions *spoilage*

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Gwern Branwen — 05 Apr 2010, 17:48 · in reply to Craig Brewer

On Mon, Apr 5, 2010 at 11:43 AM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:

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Oh noes - he believed the last letter too?

/me shakes head at Clute

What happened, man? You used to be cool.

gwern

Jonathan Goodwin — 05 Apr 2010, 18:24 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

I haven't read the review, but "love of the main characters for each other" strikes me as irony.

On Mon, Apr 5, 2010 at 12:48 PM, Gwern Branwen <gwern0 at gmail.com> wrote:

On Mon, Apr 5, 2010 at 11:43 AM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:

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gwern

Robert Thornton — 09 Apr 2010, 00:38 · in reply to Jonathan Goodwin

Hi folks,

I am a member of Goodreads, a site where readers and authors can share their experiences with books. Each member can post a rating and a small review of books that they have read/are reading.

Neil Gaiman is also a member and he posted a brief review of Sorcerer's House at:

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6845909-the-sorcerer-s-house>

I will quote the most interesting part of the review here:

"As a side note, I have a mad theory that you can always find a Wolf in a Gene Wolfe book, and it will always be the key, or a key, to the text. This book does nothing to disprove my theory."

Rob

brunians at brunians.org — 09 Apr 2010, 01:02 · in reply to Robert Thornton

It's an excellent book.

I am going to have to reread it before I form any opinions.

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Jeff Wilson — 09 Apr 2010, 16:56 · in reply to Robert Thornton

On 4/8/2010 7:38 PM, Robert Thornton wrote:

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"As a side note, I have a mad theory that you can always find a Wolf in a Gene Wolfe book, and it will always be the key, or a key, to the text. This book does nothing to disprove my theory."

Some times it's madder than others: he was on the nose with all the clues that the 5HC narrator was "Gene Wolfe", but also nominated the alzado as a sort of gene-seeking wolf.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

James Wynn — 09 Apr 2010, 19:20 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Some times it's madder than others: he was on the nose with all the clues that the 5HC narrator was "Gene Wolfe", but also nominated the alzado as a sort of gene-seeking wolf.

I thought it was Robert Borski who nailed this one first.

J.

Jeff Wilson — 09 Apr 2010, 21:52 · in reply to James Wynn

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Could be; it was maybe about 1996 when Neil and I discussed his theory that the other GENie network Wolfe topic denizens like Mantiss and Joe Mayhew seemed to already know about. CAVE CANEM seems to imply that LEXICON URTHUS (1994) helped Borski figure it out, so it might be a close thing.

Mo Holkar / UKG — 09 Apr 2010, 22:46 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

At 22:52 09/04/2010, Jeff Wilson wrote:

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I'm not sure about that last:

"Once upon a time, a not-so-young man read a book called THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS ... Then along came a book called STROKES by John Clute, where he learned FIFTH HEAD had a somewhat more sophisticated structure and that it was even possible to deduce Number Five's real name, followed still later by Michael Andre-Driussi's LEXICON URTHUS..." <http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=CaveCanem.Intro>

Suggests to me that he deduced the name after reading Strokes (pub 1988), but before reading LU (pub 1994).

best,

Mo

~ # ~

WolfeWiki -- a wiki about Gene Wolfe
<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/>

Jeff Wilson — 09 Apr 2010, 23:05 · in reply to Mo Holkar / UKG

At 22:52 09/04/2010, Jeff Wilson wrote:

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Suggests to me that he deduced the name after reading Strokes (pub 1988), but before reading LU (pub 1994)

What about Clute, then?

Dave Lebling — 10 Apr 2010, 02:21 · in reply to James Wynn

This thread makes me wish I had published that (somewhere?) back when I first figured it out, which was the first time I read 5HC in Damon Knight's Orbit 10, in 1972 or '73. Too bad there was barely even an Arpanet then, much less the Urth list. I think SF-Lovers was later, but I'm not sure.

The name of the narrator was pretty obvious from the library scene alone; the narrator looking for his father's books near works by "Winge" (Vernor Vinge), "some German" (Kate Wilhelm), Virginia Woolf, and Bertram Wolfe. Not terribly subtle. Figuring out the other two segments was much harder; that took many rereadings many years later. I was completely bewildered by them.

-- Dave Lebling, aka vizcacha

James Wynn wrote:

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J.

Mo Holkar / UKG — 12 Apr 2010, 07:43 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

At 00:05 10/04/2010, Jeff Wilson wrote:

At 22:52 09/04/2010, Jeff Wilson wrote:

"Once upon a time, a not-so-young man read a book called THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS ... Then along came a book called STROKES by John Clute, where he learned FIFTH HEAD had a somewhat more sophisticated structure and that it was even possible to deduce Number Five's real name, followed still later by Michael Andre-Driussi's LEXICON URTHUS..."
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Suggests to me that he deduced the name after reading Strokes (pub 1988), but before reading LU (pub 1994

What about Clute, then?

I haven't read Strokes (or anything else of Clute's on the subject), so I can't comment about that. Anyone else?

Mo

~ # ~

WolfeWiki -- a wiki about Gene Wolfe

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