

SF Book Club

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 29 Mar 2001

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BraveSaintCroix — 29 Mar 2001, 23:39

All,

Whoo-pee, I finally feel like I have something worthwhile to contribute to this group- unless, of course, someone beats me to it. I got the April catalogue of the Science Fiction Book Club today, and it has a one-page article/advertisement for the Book of the Short Sun. Of course, as is the way of the SFBC, it makes the book sound terribly pulp-sci-fi-ish. (. . . the inhuman, blood drinking aliens who take human form. . .) It even seems to give away quite a bit. The last paragraph reads: "As his inability to find Silk weighs heavily on his mind, Horn is further tormented by the fact that his new body bears a striking resemblance to the lost Calde. In the end, he will have to answer a troubling question: has he truly failed in his sworn task, or has he become the very man he sought?"

I'm not complaining though, because it also includes a "note from the author". Gene Wolfe writes: "At the end of the 18th Century, serious scientists denied that stones could fall from the sky. At the end of this one, very few still insist that phenomena incapable of proof are beyond the realm of possibility. We may doubt telepathy, ghost, and precognition- indeed, we should doubt them. But we cannot rule them out altogether. That phenomenon most often called astral projection plays a part in these books. (So does space travel, which most adults derided as utterly impossible not so long ago.)" And here's what really got me: "Accept it for the sake of the story, and you may learn the identity of Master Malrubius's ghost." (My emphasis.) Wow. That makes my head spin. I didn't even think of that, and if I remember, no one on here has discussed it much. Who then, was Master Malrubius's ghost?

-Steve

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.