



El soldado de Sidón

Gene Wolfe

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Latro lo olvida todo cuando duerme...La única dolorosa manera que tiene de lograr un endeble control sobre sí mismo es obligarse a escribir sus experiencias cada día en su diario y leerlas a la mañana siguiente. En busca de una cura para su trastorno, el soldado viaja de su Roma natal a Egipto, una tierra de chicas tentadoras, malvadas deidades maquinadoras y peligros misteriosos. Sin su memoria, no está seguro de nada, menos de su deseo de librarse de la maldición que le hace olvidarlo todo. Para ello, Latro y sus compañeros de viaje se adentrarán río arriba desde el sur del Nilo hasta penetrar en lo más profundo de Egipto, en un territorio legendario y desconocido.

El soldado de Sidón Details

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Panagiotis says

Δεκαεφτ' (!) χρ?νια ?στερα απ? τον δε?τερο και τελευτα?ο τ?μο, το?τος ο τ?μος ?ρχεται να κλε?σει τις περιπ?τειας του βραχυμν?μωνα, αβ?βαιας καταγωγ?ς, πρωταγωνιστ?. Δεν λ?γεται Λ?τρο, ?πως πολ? τον αποκαλο?ν, και το οπο?ο σημα?νει μισθοφ?ρος, αλλ? κ?πως αλλι?ς. ?σο κι αν μοι?ζουμε τελικ? με τους προγ?νους μας, και ?σο γοητευτικ? κι αν φά?νεται πως τελικ? π?ντα ?διοι ?μασταν, ε?ναι εξ?σου γοητευτικ? να βλ?πεις πως ?ταν η ζω? χιλιετ?ες πριν, διαφορετικ?, δ?σκολη, αλλ? πιο κοντ? στην πλ?ση. Οι ?νθρωποι αποζητο?σαν την φιλ?α, να γνωρ?σουν ?λλους ανθρ?πους και ?λλους κ?σμούς. Υπ?ρχαν πολλ? που δεν γν?ριζαν και χρησιμοποιο?σαν λ?ξεις και χειρονομ?ες που θεωρο?σαν πως ?ρμοζαν στις περιστ?σεις, για να συννενοηθο?ν με ξ?νους.

Το?το καταφ?ρνει κατ' εμ? ο Γουλφ, του οπο?ου το κρυπτικ? ?φος, και η γραφ? του, που δεν ε?ναι για τους περιστασιακο?ς αναγν?στες, εξυπηρετε? απ?λυτα τον στ?χο του. Πως μπορε? να αναπλάστε? ?νας κ?σμος, για τον οπο?ο μ?σα απ? θρα?σματα πληροφορι?ν, γνωρ?ζουμε ελ?χιστα; Ο Γουλφ κ?νει τα ιστορικ? μυθιστορ?ματα σαχλ? αναγν?σματα. ?τσι γρ?φεται, κυρ?ες και κ?ριοι, ?να σωστ? ιστορικ? αν?γνωσμα! Υπ?ρξαν οι μ?θοι, υπ?ρχαν οι θεο? και κ?ποτε χ?θηκαν. Γιατ? τους ?πλαθε το μυαλ? μας, και ?,τι το μυαλ? ξεχν?ει, χ?νεται. Κ?πως ?τσι, καταλ?γει ο πρωταγωνιστ?ς στα μισ? του βιβλ?ου, η ζω? γεννι?ται και χ?νεται, και ο κ?σμος γ?νεται στ?χτες, ?πως οι αναμν?σεις μας διαλ?ονται.

Δεν ε?ναι τυχα?α αυτ? η σειρ? στην εργογραφ?α του Γουλφ. Μια απ? τις πολλ?ς εμμον?ς του ε?ναι η ταυτ?τητα και η προ?λευση μιας ιστορ?ας: πως καταλ?γει στον αναγν?στη; Αυτ? που απασχολο?ν τον καθημ?νο -καταδικασμ?νος να ξεχν?ει κ?θε μ?ρα τα π?ντα-, και κατ? τ' ?λλα γοητευτικ? και γεννα?ο Λ?τρο, απασχολο?ν ?λους μας. Προσπαθε? να γραπωθε? απ? ?,τι του φ?ρνει η μ?ρα, για να συνθ?σει την ζω? του, γρ?φοντας το ημερολ?γιο του. Φυσικ?, αυτ? που ζει, ε?ναι μια καταπληκτικ? περιπ?τεια, που μ?νο ο Γουλφ θα μπορο?σε να συλλ?βει.

Δ?νω 4 αστ?ρια και ?χι π?ντε, γιατ?, παρ?τι καλ?, νι?θω πως ?ταν κ?πως κλο?βιο στις επιδι?ξεις του σε σχ?ση με τα ?λλα δ?ο: ο πρωταγωνιστ?ς απ? την Ελλ?δα κατ?ληξε στην Α?γυπτο και μπλ?χτηκε σε περιπ?τειες, ως ?ρμαιο των θεοτ?των, ?πως και στα ?λλα δ?ο. Κ?τι μικρ?, ?μως, ?λειπε. Κ?τι που δεν μπορ? να προσδιορ?σω, δεν ?κανε την αν?γνωση τ?σο απολαυστικ?, αντ?ξια ?σων ε?χαν προηγηθε?.

Υ.Γ. Υπ? ?λλες συνθ?κες μπορε? να ?δινα τρ?α αστ?ρια. Η ιδια?τερη γραφ? του Γουλφ ε?ναι μια συντροφ?α ανεκτ?μητης αξ?ας για εμ?να, εδ? και 12-13 χρ?νια που διαβ?ζω ευλαβικ? τα βιβλ?α του. Ε?ναι μεγ?λος πια, και κ?ποια στιγμ? θα ξ?ρω πως δεν θα μπορ?σω να διαβ?σω ?λλες σελ?δες του. ?να αστερ?κι παραπ?νω, ε?ναι μια σταγ?να στον ωκεαν? της ευγνωμοσ?νης που νι?θω για ?σα μου ?χει δ?σει.

Clay Kallam says

Gene Wolfe wrote one of the classics of modern science fiction, the four-volume *Book of the New Sun*. For whatever reason, it has not been accorded the iconic status it deserves, and first, I urge any of you who have not read it to go get 'Shadow and Claw,' which collects the first two volumes, and read it immediately.

Wolfe's other works, though praiseworthy, have not surprisingly fallen short of the standard set by his masterpiece, and the third volume in the Latro series is no different. 'Soldier of Sidon' (Tor, \$14.95, 319 pages) is wonderfully written, granted, but its strange premise ultimately can't quite work.

The setup is this: Latro is a Roman soldier in the third century BCE who suffers a serious head wound that renders him incapable of retaining short-term memories. Every night when he goes to sleep, he wakes up having forgotten what has happened to him since his injury. He can still talk and fight and think and observe, but every morning he needs to be reminded of who the people are that he's working and living with.

The conceit is that the book is Latro's diary, written on a long scroll, and 'Soldier of Sidon' is about Latro's adventures in ancient Egypt – but the gods and goddesses are extremely real. In fact, one of the byproducts of Latro's injury is that he can see spirits and demons that normal people can't. Gods talk to him, and his companions recognize this, and honor him as god-touched.

This fantasy element makes all of the Latro books more than just very well done historical fiction (you can find the first two novels in 'Latro in the Mist'), but Latro's inability to remember anything means that he can't really grow or develop as the plot unfolds. He's the same person every day no matter what has happened – and it's also hard for him to write every day, especially if there are battles, so much of the action is offstage and some must be inferred.

But Wolfe is a master, the pages turn, and Latro's quest for healing is couched in a detailed and fascinating portrait of life in a different world. 'Soldier of Sidon', and the previous two novels, aren't quite *The Book of the New Sun*, but then again, what is?

Wendy says

I actually debated a bit whether to give this book three stars or four, because while it's very good in a lot of ways, it's also very frustrating in some.

First, the good bits. Gene Wolfe provides a fascinating depiction of the ancient world (primarily Egypt and Nubia), and a very interesting narrator: Latro, because of an old head wound and/or a god's curse, has no long term memory. He forgets everything while he sleeps, and so he keeps a scroll with him in which he jots down accounts of events. His periodic re-reading of this scroll has to serve him in place of a memory. The novel takes the form of the text of his scroll.

This makes for a fascinating and challenging read. We, as readers, have memories of things that Latro doesn't. It's often up to us to make connections between events. If something prevents Latro from writing in the scroll, there's no record of it, and we have to puzzle things out from any available clues. There are several such small gaps in the story, and one quite substantial gap, where I'm still not sure I've put everything together correctly. Not an easy read, but if you've got any taste for solving puzzles, you'll probably enjoy it.

Now, on to the frustrating parts. To a reader who has read a lot of Wolfe, some aspects of the book start to seem familiar. With his interesting memory problem set aside, here is Latro's story in a nutshell: a somewhat directionless but basically goodhearted man goes on a long journey. He becomes the protector of a prostitute with a heart of gold, meets an old man with mysterious powers who pretends to be his friend but seems to have ulterior motives, and receives messages and instructions from a bunch of gods, most of whom can only

be seen by him. I get the feeling that I've read this one before. Was it *The Knight*? Or maybe *The Book of the Long Sun*? Or maybe *The Book of the New Sun*? Or maybe all of them?

Second frustration - this is the third book in Latro's story (after *Soldier of the Mist* and *Soldier of Arete*). Fans of the earlier books had to wait over a decade for this installment. Personally, I was hoping for some resolution, but at the end of the book, we don't seem much closer to finding the key to Latro's memory loss than we were before.

Despite these frustrations, I gave it four stars because I had a hard time putting it down, and I'll buy the sequel in a heartbeat when/if it comes out.

Rodrigo Medina says

Pesadito. La fórmula estaba más que acabada con los dos anteriores. La forma de narrar (obligada al tratarse de un amnésico en plan memento) desespera.

Terry says

Gene Wolfe's third volume of the Soldier series is divorced from the first two in several ways. The most obvious is the fact that it was written 17 years after the last volume, leaving quite a cliffhanger for contemporary readers (and actually no indication that there would even be a sequel). The other is the fact that even in-story the events occur at a significant remove from those that transpired in *Soldier of the Mist* and *Soldier of Arete*. As *Sidon* opens we find that Latro has been living back at home, apparently with his wife, for some time (though given that this is a Gene Wolfe book I'm not sure if I quite believe that everything is exactly as it appears) though his condition is no better than when last we saw him and he tends to sit despondently in front of his door where the word "Riverland" (aka Egypt) is written (apparently he believes that going to this distant country will enable him to heal himself...we've heard something similar before I think). Latro is visited by an old friend, the Persian ship captain Muslak who is one of the few remaining links to the previous two volumes, and his friend promptly decides to bring Latro with him as he just so happens to be taking a shipment of goods to the Nile delta.

What follows is an adventure similar to what we have already seen Latro undertake, though this time the setting is ancient Egypt and Nubia and the secondary cast of characters is different. In a nutshell Muslak's ship is commandeered by the Persian satrap of Egypt to cruise down the Nile and discover anything that may be of use to him from the countries to the south. Travelling in this band are a Persian magi and his Egyptian priest-scribe, an Egyptian sorcerer-priest, two "singing girls" (aka temple prostitutes who become the "river wives" of Latro and Muslak), an Athenian wine-merchant, several eldritch familiars, and various sailors and soldiers. As before Latro is pulled in several directions by the machinations of the various gods and supernatural creatures he is able to see, as well as by the all-too human people who want to make use of him for their own ends. Aside from the new locale I have to admit that I didn't notice a lot of difference between this volume and the others and little, if any, final resolution is forthcoming from Wolfe. Still, I enjoy being in Latro's company and seeing the ancient world (both natural and supernatural) through his eyes.

I like the way, throughout the Soldier series, that Wolfe is able to make the gods into a real living and breathing element of the civilizations that spawned them. They don't come across merely as archetypes or placeholders (though they do indeed serve those purposes, at least partially), but they are also not just humans with superpowers. There is something distinctly 'other' about them that seems equally tied to their roles as both stewards of particular elements of creation and embodiments of basic aspects of the human psyche. Within this 'god-as-archetype' role, however, they still retain distinct personalities that elevate them beyond being mere ciphers. The gods of Egypt seem different from those of Greece not only in their physical forms, but also in that they seem to have a less vested interest in Latro. I got the sense from the first two volumes that the Greek pantheon had a specific purpose in mind when they 'recruited' Latro as a pawn to their internecine fighting, but while the Egyptian gods are more than willing to make use of him, they seem to be doing so for much less personal reasons. Of course I still have no idea what exactly those reasons were for the Greek pantheon, so the jury's still out on that one.

As in the other volumes Latro is once again led by prophecy to visit various temples along his path, this time following the Nile river to its source. Various gods and powers meet him along the way and help or hinder him as they see fit. He overcomes a variety of vicissitudes including enslavement, betrayal, and abandonment; he also meets an unexpected old friend in a time of great need, but ultimately ends this phase of his adventures perhaps worse off than he was when he started and on the verge of yet another seemingly hopeless quest. One hopes that this cliffhanger will be resolved in a subsequent volume and that the wait won't be another 17 years.

Also posted at Shelf Inflicted

Christopher says

Plots to Gene Wolfe books always strike me as secondary. Yes there's a goal of sorts but the real pleasure is in the journey and the beautiful language Wolfe employs to get you there.

Here, mercenary Latro finds himself in Egypt floating southward up the Nile on a mission from Xerxes to learn and document the lands to the south (i.e. Africa). As with his adventures in Greece, Latro can't remember things from day to day and must write them down in a scroll. His head wound also has the effect of his being able to see physical manifestations of gods and goddesses. It makes for some surreal scenes that are captivating.

There are so many wonderful lines in this book, here are few I noted (and they all appear within 5 pages of each other!):

"No one can be good unless he is brave; and any man who is brave is good in that, if it no other way. If he is brave enough, there must always be some good in him."

...

"Any wife who is loved has been good enough."

...

"I have said I am free; but surely no man is free who does not know how he came to be so."

Seriously? It's just not fair.

manuti says

Último libro de la temporada.

Han pasado 20 años desde que Gene Wolfe publicó la primera parte de esta serie de novelas, primero fue **Soldado de la niebla** y un par de años después **Soldado de areté**. Aún recuerdo lo bien que lo pasé leyendo esta primera novela con 15 añitos de edad, y quedando para siempre enganchado con la **Grecia** clásica.

En esta tercera entrega de la serie, **Latro** el protagonista (muy semejante al amnésico de la película Memento) **remonta el río Nilo** y se da un paseo por **Egipto**. Si no has leído las dos partes anteriores (y que después de 20 años no creo que sean fáciles de encontrar en papel) te pierdes bastante, pero teniendo en cuenta que la amnesia del personaje principal no repite prácticamente nada de lo que le ha pasado en las otras novelas por que simplemente no se acuerda. En la reseña de Lothlórien profundizan mucho más, así que léela.

Le he dado **3 estrellas**, supongo que por cariño, pero bien podrían ser solo 2. Ahora, que **si reeditan o encontráis la primera de las novelas no dudéis en comprarla**, esa sí que merece la pena. Otra cosa que se debe tener en cuenta es que termina de manera inconclusa, y apunta a otra continuación, supongo que menos espaciada en el tiempo.

Reseña de Soldado de Sidón en Lothlórien
Gene Wolfe en la wikipedia

Aaron Francis says

If I were Gene Wolfe I would never get any writing done, because I would be stopping every two paragraphs to high five myself and punch the sky and yell HOLY CRAP I AM SO AWESOME HOW DO I EVEN DO IT

Four stars because it was easier to read than the first two. Is this guy going soft in his old age? I did not feel challenged; in fact I felt kinda spoon-fed. Good thing i was being spoon-fed FUCKING AWESOME

Matthew says

"The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there," was L.P. Hartley's nostalgia-fraught opening line in the novel, The Go-Between. That quality of foreignness, when well captured and faithfully presented, is what ensorcelles the devoted reader of historical novels. Its noticeable absence -- as when some medieval captain of archers orders his men to "ready, aim, fire!" -- jars the aficionado's anachronism detector, and harshly cancels the spell.

In *Soldier of Sidon*, Gene Wolfe's long-awaited resumption of the travels of a brain-damaged Roman of the fifth century BCE, the enchantment never falters. In this episode we reconnect with the centurion Lucius (or Latro, as he was known in the first two books, *Soldier of the Mist* and *Soldier of Arete*), some years after he made it home from Greece after the Hellenes had fought off the last invasion by Persia. Lucius had served on the losing side, a mercenary in King Xerxes's army that was slaughtered by Spartan and Athenian hoplites at the Battle of Plataea. There he suffered a catastrophic head wound that left him with a great scar on his scalp and a brain that can only remember the last twelve hours.

As *Soldier of Sidon* opens, Lucius's Phoenician friend, Masluk, a sea captain he freed from slavery, has come to see if the Roman has recovered from his peculiar affliction. He finds him no better, but Lucius has written the name "Riverland" above his door, as a reminder that he must go to Egypt to discover what has happened to him. Why Egypt? We don't know. Unlike the straight-flowing Nile, where much of this novel is set, a Wolfe novel is not made for easy navigation. Masluk, motivated to help his benefactor, has brought Lucius along on a trading voyage to the Nile delta. After selling his cargo of fine leather, the Phoenician hires out his ship to the local Persian satrap (Egypt then being under Persian rule); he is to take an expedition up-river to learn what he can about the sources of the Nile. Along the way, they will try to do what they can for the Roman.

Wolfe then assembles an interesting collation of voyagers: a Persian magus to be in charge of the expedition; two Egyptian priests, devoted to two different gods and not on the best of terms with each other; two "river-wives," dancing girls hired to be Lucius's and Masluk's comforts for the voyage; a handful of Persian and Egyptian soldiers for Lucius to command; an Athenian wine merchant acting for an Egyptian whose son has been captured by a Nubian king who would prefer to keep secret the location of his gold mines.

There are also some less visible passengers and wayside encounters -- demons, familiars, gods -- and a wax effigy of a woman that can be brought to life if her cheeks are smeared with fresh blood. Each of these characters has his or her own agenda. They may tell the truth or they may lie and dissemble and intrigue against each other as their various interests dictate. And all of their doings and sayings are presented to us through the diary of the brain-injured stranger, who tries to write down everything he needs to remember on a scroll that he carries with him.

It makes for a remarkable tale-telling, because Lucius is a perpetual innocent, struggling to make sense of the new world that is offered to him over every morning's breakfast. Sometimes he is able to consult his scroll and match his intuitive liking or distrust of the individuals around him to his own record of their past behaviors; sometimes he is fooled, as when the woman of wax works her wiles upon him. Yet his instincts are usually reliable, and his essential character is noble, for all the blood that stains his hands.

This book, the two that went before, and the one to follow (for Lucius is not yet done with his quest), are offered to us as fantasies. I think they are not fantasies, but well-wrought historical novels; they are faithful recreations of a long-vanished world from the viewpoint of a person who might well have existed. True, Lucius sees more gods and demons than most of his contemporaries, and some of them are more interested in him than in his companions, but those deities and spirits are part of the normal intellectual furniture of the ancient mind. Ancient Egypt is doubly foreign country, and Gene Wolfe has got the "differently" part of Hartley's famous line just right.

After waiting fifteen years for Latro to continue, I am once again looking forward to what happens next.

Reed says

It's been a long, long time since Wolfe's wonderful pair of novels--Soldier in the Mist and Soldier of Arete--came out and dazzled me to no end. Wolfe's tremendous knowledge of ancient lands, his unique take on a most unreliable narrator, Latro the soldier with no long term memory (the complete opposite from Severian in the Book of the New Sun who cannot forget), and a unique take on ancient mythology. I simply LOVED those books.

20 or so years later, along comes a continuation of the Latro series, Soldier of Sidon. I avoided the book for over a year, because I knew there was no way it could measure up to the expectations I held.

Well, I was wrong.

Sure, this 3rd novel is much more "accessible" than the previous two, as the earlier works, particularly the second, were dense and often hard to navigate, to say the least. But accessible is certainly not a bad thing. I Latro's latest adventures, now in Egypt, quite enjoyable. He continues to drift through a series of adventures, yearning to cure his curse of forgetting, hoping to no longer need to write down his life in scrolls in order to create a written "memory". The gods are still visible to Latro, and little touches such as Latro admiring the beauty of the sun god's boat carrying the sun still give this reader pleasure.

I must admit, the book was somewhat frustrating. Occasionally I recall thinking that Latro has done this sort of thing before, whether it's encounter an odd mythological creature no one else can see, or get propositioned by an inhumanly beautiful woman, and so forth. So the "newness" has worn off slightly.

What was surprising to me was the fact Wolfe doesn't tie up the sequence, but appears to leave room for another novel. Oh well. I can wait. I waited 20 years for this one.

Brian Rogers says

This is clearly later stage Wolfe - he's moved from being subtle to so sharp that he could cut himself, and sometimes does. The book is good, but it lacks the sweep and grandeur of the prior Latro tales, instead being very much like his other 21st century books such as Pirate Freedom, where the action is in most scenes confined and there are mysteries of time and place to be sussed out from incomplete conversations and unreliable narrators. Yes, Wolfe has always used unreliable narrators, but it's more pronounced in his 21st century works.

Taking Latro and moving him to the Egypt of his time produces many interesting places to visit and cultures to explore, so it's worth reading for that alone. The nature of the storytelling serves to hide the "And then Latro and company go here, and got on this short adventure, in which inexplicable and magical things happen" that makes up the surface level of the story. When you add in Wolfe's skill with language and the challenges he poses it gets even better. It's just not as exceptional as the first two - in part because there isn't as much going on under the surface as there is in Mist and Arete.

Alissa says

3.5 stars rounded down because while the novel is polished and entertaining, it's slower and less involving than its predecessors.

This is not the conclusion of Latro's journey, it's more like a standalone-ish addition to the series than a proper continuation since the second book provided more of an ending; anyway I couldn't pass up the chance and I'm happy I spent more time in Latro's world. This time, the tale is set down the Nile and I really appreciated the philosophy, the mythology and the dream scenes.

Latro's prowess is undisputed, he's gods-touched but he's also at the mercy of others' words and vulnerable; his record is pervaded throughout with his weariness at the reality of his predicament and with his constant, almost compulsive need to write and reread in order to remember his reality. The writing style is poised and perfunctory; I think it efficiently conveys Latro's struggles and possibly Wolfe's evolution as a writer, too, since there is a sizable time gap with the previous novel

Yet this detached Latro is never without hope or humanity (or humour) and that makes his tale very enjoyable. He is still the quintessential unreliable narrator, but not because he tries to deceive himself or the reader; he strives to pursue the truth and retain a semblance of control, to find the strength to make a decision for himself and stay focused even if he has amnesia.

As usual, the interactions between the characters, their mutual dependencies or conflicting desires and the historical/geographical background are impressive.

Definitely not my last Gene Wolfe!

Soldiers fight, and kings take the spoil. What does a soldier get? A few coins, perhaps, a ring from a dead man's finger, and many scars. What does a horse get? Only death. We ride them, and they--our kings--ride us.

Joe says

This book really surprised me. I am very glad that I had long blocks of time to read in, otherwise it would have been difficult to follow (much like the first two volumes).

Wolfe continues Latro's story in an exciting new setting and his usual unusual style. The combination of an amnesiac narrator who sees and interacts with gods, but relies on other characters advice (characters who all manipulate the truth for their own gain, and whose motivations are opaque at best) makes for very interesting reading. The setting of Egypt and Namibia are also more exiting to me than Sparta/ Greece were. I was less frustrated following along with events and characters in this last volume, although frequent trips to the glossary helped a lot.

The quality of writing was excellent, and there was a lot more plot per page than many Wolfe novels, which is refreshing. New standout characters were Sabra, the wives, Muslak, and all the Gods.

As an added bonus, I also learned a lot about ancient Egypt and their relationships with the rest of Africa, due to Wolfe's attention to an accurate historical setting.

Scott says

I once again broke my own self-imposed rules for reading Gene Wolfe novels - never put it down for more than 24 hours, and never read less than 30 pages in a sitting. By not following these rules, my appreciation of the book suffered a bit. That said...

This was another pleasant, rich, and creative addition to the "Soldier" series, being a sequel to *Soldier of the Mist* and *Soldier of Arete*. Here, Latro finds himself on a boat sailing south along the Nile as part of an expedition to chart little-known areas deeper into the African continent. As he was in Greece and surrounding areas in the previous books, he is still able to see various gods and supernatural creatures, though his memories still fade after roughly 24 hours. The various gods of Egypt and regions south are just as wondrous and dangerous as those Latro had previously encountered, and their involvement in the story are great fun, and sometimes even unnerving.

The tone and style are very similar to the earlier Soldier books, though there is a bit less action in this volume. In lieu of that, there is a sinister element at times, which is quite effective. And as with the other books, Latro is a tragic figure in some ways, though one whose true nature is revealed in how he acts and reacts to others. There is often something to be gleaned about human nature and its relationship with the gods we keep, even if it is not always obvious, as per Gene Wolfe's usual approach.

This one might not be among my all-time favorite Wolfe novels, and it won't be an entry point for those uninitiated. But this is a solid work, and one that fans of Wolfe will appreciate.

Michael says

Every Wolfe book is a treasure to be savored.

This novel follows the journey of Latro, a Hellene who has been touched by the gods and forgets everything each morning when he wakes. SoS is the third book in the Latro sequence (the previous ones being *_Soldier of Arete_* and *_Soldier of the Mist_*) so don't start off with this one.

Wolfe is an apt historian, and his descriptions of Egypt and Nubia, their people and their gods are both lively and accurate. Wolfe is such a fantastic writer. This book was as 'filling' for me as any of his others have been.

EDIT: This novel won the 2007 World Fantasy Award (for books published in 2006)!
