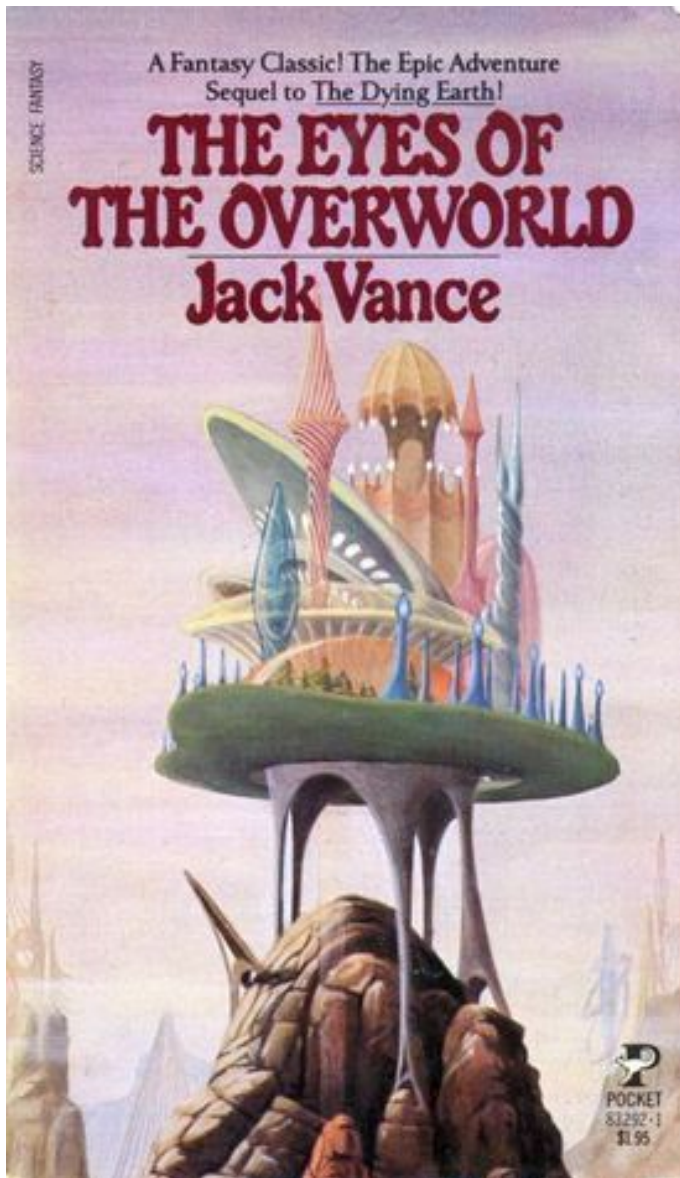

Jack Vance

The Eyes of the Overworld (The Dying Earth #2)



Title: The Eyes of the Overworld (The Dying Earth #2)

Author: Jack Vance

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Description

Scoundrel Cugel is sent far away, by a magician he has wronged, to retrieve magical lenses that reveal the Overworld. Goaded by a homesick monster magically attached to his liver, he journeys across wastelands home to Almetry. With a cult group on a pilgrimage, he crosses the Silver Desert, and meets more danger and betrayal as he betrays others.

Insightful reviews

William:

* Summary

Cugel "The Clever" a rogue somewhat in the spirit of Frasier's Flashman, runs afoul of Luconnu "The Laughing Magician." Luconnu sends Cugel on an errand to a faraway land, magically conveying him there, but leaving Cugel to return, the hard way, compelled by Luconnu's parasitic servant, Frix.

Cugel's adventures on the way back, lead him from through danger and treachery and every manner of wonder and terror of Vance's imagination. It's pretty much a showcase for what Vance does best: imaginary exotica.

* What I liked about it

I like the name. "Cugel" makes me think of "cudgel" - a blunt instrument, for striking and rendering helpless. "Clever" makes me think of "cleaver" - of cutting and making fine distinctions. What Cugel thinks himself and what he proves of himself over the course of this book, compliment and expand on his paradoxical name. (Note: I believe Vance probably had in mind the original meaning of "clever" relating to the hand - a claw, seizing and taking).

Cugel is a wicked, wicked man, and in desperate and dire straits. Cugel suffers - oh does he suffer! - such spectacular torments one wouldn't wish on anyone not at least as evil and desperate as Cugel. But, I've carefully noted, his sufferings are incidental to his sins. I believe there is moral irony here, the same kind that frustrates moralists and decent people when the evil seem to "get away with it" but I believe, craftily inverted. My outrage at Cugel's vile acts, gives way to delight at what seem to be Cugel's punishments, but I'm left unsettled, I don't sense any justice here. I could, and have accepted *The Eyes of the Overworld* as black comedy with no further gloss. but I have since found it unsettling, but rewarding to think carefully on Cugel's various episodes. If Cugel were less wicked, he wouldn't survive, and on rereading, I've found grace notes of sympathy and even admiration while still feeling appalled.

I have found themes of justice and revenge in almost all I've read of Vance. One the one hand these are primal desires which are probably easy to write about quickly, and Vance seems more concerned with fantastical cultures, set dressing, and wordplay than on these grander notions.

* What I didn't like about it

I think Vance's prose here is generally in excellent form, possibly better than many other books I've read of his. But it does wander about sometimes.

*** General thoughts**

The Eyes of the Overworld is very short but very dense. A malicious little darkling gem.

?an Starling: Cugel is my favorite Jack Vance character. I am presently occupied in translating both this and the second book into Esperanto...as a hobby, I might add...because I just enjoy them so much and wanted to share (with full permission, of course).

Cugel is no one you'd care to know too very well. He is a rogue's rogue: charming and witty. But you'd have your hand on your purse the whole while he was around. His plans for larceny are often successful...right up to the point where comically they fall apart...or are undone by some past enemy. By the same token, he himself is the undoing of any plans his enemies have for doing likewise to him...again in almost comical fashion.

And all the side characters are colorful too. Take Radkuth Vomin's woeful demise. Truly a lesson for us all. These are books I find myself reading again and again. I also own the audiobook versions and play them repeatedly in the car about once a year.

Bryan: An absolute masterpiece of literature. Every word is sublimely exquisite, and reading this book is a sheer pleasure for those who appreciate language. Deft turns of phrase, arcane vocabulary, and humorous (yet adultly gruesome) situations abound in this classic. A simply magnificent and wondrous book - definitely one that should not be missed.

Do NOT delay - get this book and immerse yourself into the most sumptuous writings you'll encounter. But don't read this book when your mind is cluttered - you'll miss so much if you attend to this book with anything less than your full attention.

Definitely a strong contender for my FAVORITE book ever... 5 stars are insufficient and a surfeit of multiples of stars should instead be available!

Hein: in case your event with fable is that it truly is tediously long, badly written, and consistently comprises a few morally-beige quest of fine conquering evil, then i beg you to learn Jack Vance, and particularly the loss of life Earth sequence (collected in "Tales of the loss of life Earth"). His immaculate prose and large command of the English language creates really good conversations among characters and a desirable glimpse into an outdated model of Earth, basking within the final rays of the sun. right here we have now a couple of final inhabitants, quite often doubtful rogues, zealouts, and hermitic alchemists, ready to trick or be tricked. this can be a superb, shiny and stimulating selection of tales that exudes innovative power. With the new dying of Mr Vance, now we have misplaced a very extraordinary and beautiful voice.

danielp: Wildly eccentric picaresque fable tale within the vein of P. G. Wodehouse and likely fairy tales, starring an totally amoral and decadent hero, again and again attempting to make his

fortune and failing hilariously (albeit now not without causing mass distress on each blameless and never so blameless bystanders through the process) in an totally amoral and decadent world. must have been Cugel the Cruel, really. There are deeper, much less cynical, academia- and navel gazer-friendly books out there, additionally most likely a few with extra literary merit, yet oh boy, none of them has part the joys and creativity than this one. somebody someday may still write a paper on Vance's affects - my antennae sign in pretty well every little thing from sixteenth century chapbooks via Grimmelshausen to wartime pulp magazines, additionally most likely a good quantity of jazz and profound first-hand reviews of human nature. No ask yourself Wolfe and Pratchett grew to become so great: either stand on his back, after all. What may I add? certainly one of my so much enjoyed books of all time, and love is blind: if there are any shortcomings to the Eyes of the Overworld, i did not have the capacity to spot any of them in the course of our ten-year-long relationship.(Also, for a few reason, makes me give some thought to artwork Nouveau illustrations. Weird.)

Kat Hooper: initially published AT myth Literature. I've already said, quite a few times, how a lot i like Jack Vance, so I'll pass all that this time. you could learn different experiences in this web page in case you overlooked that. The Eyes of the Overworld is the second one a part of stories of the demise Earth and the most personality is considered one of my favourite Vance characters: the self-titled Cugel the Clever. Cugel isn't the type of man you need to have dealings with — he's clever, sneaky, thoroughly egocentric and remorseless. he's constantly attempting to determine how he can reap the benefits of people so that it will make his personal conditions better. In The Eyes of the Overworld, Cugel comes to a decision to burglarize the home of Lucounu the giggling Magician so he can promote a few of Lucounu's thaumaturgical artifacts. however the magician catches Cugel and punishes him via environment him on a quest to acquire a lens which permits the wearer to view the overworld. Cugel is clever, yet as smart as he is, he frequently reveals himself dealing with a foe who, no less than temporarily, manages to outwit him (which constantly surprises Cugel). This time his quest leads him on a chain of misadventures during which he: will get captured via rat people... is pressured to be the watchman of a village... steals multiple person's inheritance... bargains with demons... trades a lady for information... impersonates a god... and travels one million years into the past. anywhere he goes, Cugel, occasionally purposely and infrequently unwittingly, leaves sorrow and destruction in his wake. He deprives humans in their hope, their religion and, often, their lives. This doesn't sound love it might be very entertaining, yet oh, it is! That's as the tale is written in Jack Vance's singular style: excessive language, strange occurrences, and Vance's attribute humor. I hate to assert it again, however the most sensible comparability i will make is to Monty Python. If you're keen on that form of unusual darkish humor, then this could be your thing. I listened to The Eyes of the Overworld in audio format. I can't exhibit how excited i used to be to benefit that Brilliance Audio was once generating these, and I'm happy to file that they did a very good job. Arthur Morey once more introduced out all the nuances of Vance's humor and he made an ideal Cugel. In fact, The Eyes of the Overworld used to be even greater than The loss of life Earth, most likely since it follows an identical major personality instead of being divided up into separate brief stories. I enjoyed it.

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