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# A Night In The Lonesome October



## Synopsis

Zelazny manages to cleverly combine Jack (the Ripper), Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Frankenstein, and Dracula together with witches, werewolves, druids and many others in this amusing tale of an approaching confrontation that, on the Halloween of a full-moon, will change the cosmic balance of power between good and evil. Told through the eyes of Snuff, Jack's guard dog, who performs magical calculations in addition to accompanying his master on collecting expeditions into 19th century London. Twists and turns of magical espionage and adventure unfold as this unforgettable tale plays out over the course of 31 lonesome nights in October.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Leaving his ever-popular and ever-expanding Amber series behind for the nonce, Zelazny delivers a cheerful, witty, well-crafted fantasy narrated by Snuff, dog-companion to Jack the Ripper. It seems that Jack is in fact a sorcerer and his gruesome exploits were perpetrated in the service of his magic. But the Ripper's killings are tangential to the tale of an upcoming struggle between magical personages. In a rare occurrence, the cosmic forces are in alignment, permitting an opening for the Elder Gods to return to Earth. "Openers" are contending with "closers," who want to keep the Elder Gods shut out. Snuff recounts the day-by-day preparations as players size up the competition, gather their magical arsenals and make and break alliances. Snuff himself maneuvers among other familiars (a cat named Graymalk, a snake called Quicklime, etc.). An instantly recognizable gothic compliment of characters includes a mad doctor trying to reanimate a patchwork corpse with lightning, a werewolf named Larry Talbot and a "Great Detective" who haunts the sidelines. Zelazny

handles this material with a charm few can match, and while this novel does not approach the depth of his best work like *Lord of Light*, its deft, understated good humor and spare, poetic prose reaffirm Zelazny as one of fantasy's most skilled practitioners. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

After years of unprepossessing folderol--the wearisome *Nine Princes in Amber* retreads are depressingly typical--Zelazny bursts forth with, well, ``Victorian light supernatural fantasy'' just about covers it. Narrator Snuff, a guard dog who performs complex thaumaturgical calculations in his head, has many duties: to keep various Things firmly trapped in mirrors, wardrobes, and steamer trunks; to accompany his master, Jack--he of the magical blade--on weird collecting expeditions into the graveyards and slums of Victorian London; and--for a single hour each night--discuss the day's goings-on in human speech. Snuff's neighbors include: Jill the witch and her familiar, Graymalk the cat, with whom Snuff forms a friendly alliance; Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Frankenstein, Dracula, a werewolf, and a satanic vicar. The witches, detectives, doctors, vampires, etc., along with their equally industrious familiars, trade information and scheme for advantage as the full moon of Halloween approaches; at that time, a magical showdown to decide the fate of the Earth will occur. Some of the characters are ``openers,'' determined to open a magical doorway allowing the Old Gods to reoccupy the Earth; others are ``closers,'' equally resolved to keep the magical door nailed shut; and a few are involved yet stand outside the Game altogether. Snuff's problem is to discover who is which. Sparkling, witty, delightful: Zelazny's best for ages, perhaps his best ever. -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

How many times have I read Roger Zelazny's "A Night in the Lonesome October"? I literally can't remember if it's four or five or six. And it never loses its freshness or excitement. And how do I write a review for this book that will do it justice? So cleverly written, and readers will delight in figuring out one by one who each of the "players" in the game are -- many of which are characters from Victorian literature. Even though this was my fourth or more go-round with these characters, I stayed up late to experience the novel's unique ending all over again. It's one of the best books I've ever read -- not just one of the best fantasy or science-fiction books. Want proof? My three children, then teenagers, listened to it twice on car trips, lapping up every word, eager to hear what was to come next. Now

that's magic! Set in Victorian London and the surrounding countryside, "A Night in the Lonesome October" begins: "I'm a watchdog. My name is Snuff. But Snuff is no ordinary watchdog nor is his master any ordinary Jack. Nor are any of their neighbors ordinary. Soon enough you realize who Jack is, and who the Great Detective and his rotund companion, the Count, the Good Doctor, and the other "players" are in a deadly serious game that could well usher in the end of the world as we currently experience it, a game that takes place every time a full moon occurs on that night in the lonesome October, October 31. Although a full moon coincides with Halloween only three or four times in a century, Snuff has played the game many times before. Before the game comes to its thrilling culmination on Halloween night, several players will die, several animal companions will flee, and much blood and mayhem will flow. Significantly, the word "Halloween," an abbreviated version of the Christian expression "All Hallows' Eve," is used but once or twice in the book, which details very un-Christian goings-ons. (To reveal any more would ruin the book.) But the book isn't as dark as it sounds. With lots of irony and wit, "A Night in the Lonesome October" will make you rue that Zelazny died before penning a sequel. You will recognize the deft allusions to famous characters in fiction, which provides part of the fun in this masterful fantasy novel. If you have the privilege of enjoying the audio version of A Night in the Lonesome October, you will hear Roger Zelazny himself reading it, and he does a magnificent job before than the average professional reader. You can buy the audio version through Speaking Volumes:

<http://speakingvolumes.mybigcommerce.com/a-night-in-the-lonesome-october-by-roger-zelazny-mp3-audiobook-download/>

I love this book. I read it every October, one day at a time. Zelazny has a way of creating amazing characters that just pull you in. If I ever get a watchdog, I am going to name him Snuff.

Five Quite Excellent Reasons to read A Night in Lonesome October by Roger Zelazny: 1. The story is narrated solely from the point of view of a nice dog named Snuff. 2. Snuff's owner is Jack the Ripper. He's actually a good guy. All those murders? It was a curse. 3. There are delightful interior illustrations by Gahan Wilson. See for yourself. 4. The plot is a parody of H.P. Lovecraft, complete with Elder Gods and everything. The cast includes Sherlock Holmes, Count Dracula, Frankenstein and the Wolf Man. Yes, really. All of them. 5. Roger Zelazny, the author, is one of the great cult-favorite writers of science fiction and fantasy. He was a direct, openly acknowledged influence

on many other writers, among them Neil Gaiman, Steve Brust, and George R. R. Martin. *A Night in Lonesome October* is one of Zelazny's lesser-known works, but also one of the quirkiest and funniest. It reads like Douglas Adams taking a detour into Horror Ave. after prancing about in *Mystery Boulevard*, sniggering at genre in-jokes all the way.

I'm not going to lie--this book isn't amazing as far as the writing goes. However, I adore it. Mainly because it takes an active imagination to bring together Jack the Ripper, Frankenstein, Dracula, and other famous literary characters into a book about Halloween and the elder gods. And I love that it's narrated by a dog (who isn't really a dog, but just roll with it). On top of this, I have the audiobook, which is read by Zelazny himself. He is a terrible narrator! However, I love the audio just as much as the book. I can't explain it. Don't buy this book because I recommend it. Buy it if you're willing to take a chance on a quirky story about Halloween and many characters you are probably already familiar with who come together for a very unique occasion. This isn't great literature, but, for some, it will be very enjoyable.

Narrated by a dog who is not just a dog, this tale involving many well-known literary personages who converge every once in a while to save or destroy the world in a Lovecraft mythos is great macabre fun. As always, Zelazny manages to compress dread, darkness, intrigue, humor, and horror into dense prose. It ends a bit abruptly but the journey is the thing, as they say.

This is by Roger Zelazny, so I expected complex characters, subverted tropes, and mysteries that only deepen as the tale unfolds - and all that is true. I certainly never realized Zelazny's fondness for Sherlock Holmes, Noir, Universal horror films, and H.P. Lovecraft until now. Good and evil are relative (even in *Shadows of Amber*) and familiar characters take on new depth when the Great Old Ones get thrown into the mix. The pace increases as Halloween approaches, stalled only for a lyrical detour into one of the lesser-known kingdoms of the Cthulhu mythos, which Zelazny handles like a true Lovecraft aficionado. Zelazny reads this with subtle humor, and nods to Noir that are very reminiscent of some of Corwin's dialog. He does a great job with the character's voices and tone. I used to read this book each October, a chapter a night, but now listening to the prose read by the author is going to be the rule...each lonesome October to come.

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