



# Wolfling

*Gordon R. Dickson*

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Vintage paperback

## Wolfling Details

Date : Published May 1st 1985 by Baen (first published 1969)

ISBN : 9780671559625

Author : Gordon R. Dickson

Format : Mass Market Paperback

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Fantasy

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# From Reader Review Wolfling for online ebook

## Shae Erisson says

Fun space opera, US patriotic 1960s wish fulfillment, but still enjoyable

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## Marianne says

What if we were merely a forgotten colony of a larger advanced human civilization? This short book races you through the story as an Earth wolfling is the first invited to visit civilization, sent by Earth to observe.

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## Sandra Visser says

*The High-born ruled a thousand worlds.*

*A hundred years in our future, the first expedition from Earth reaches Alpha Centauri only to discover a vast human empire, long-established and sternly ruled by the aristocratic High-born. In a stroke Earth becomes merely another primitive outpost, its people dubbed "wolflings" by the rulers of the Throne World.*

*Painstakingly chosen and meticulously trained, Jim Keil was sent merely to observe conditions on the Throne World. The High-born would consider him no more than a diversion...until Keil cast away his orders from Earth and proved a Wolfling indeed.*

An enjoyably pulpy sci-fi adventure that reads quickly and easily. The hero is likeable even though he's a bit too superhuman and the High-born are fascinating. The descriptions of technology are easy to understand and there's even a forerunner to the lightsaber. (view spoiler)

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## Randal says

Pretty standard man / superman sci-fi novel. Frighteningly racist (tall, powerful, extra-white people are genetically superior to short, weak-minded, dark-skinned people) and primarily memorable as the first mention of lightsabers. No, not by name, but the High-born (yup actual name of uberrace) wield rods that when activated emit an energy beam from one end that are used like swords.

Despite the cover image on the Dell paperback (not shown as an option on Goodreads) with the woman in a skimpy cloud bikini, there is about zero point zero one percent sex in the book (High-born women wear diaphanous stuff, but from armpit to ankle, not the Princess Leia slave costume on the cover). There is a loyal love interest, but she's from the Wholesome Mom-in-waiting school, not the James Bond Girl school of '60s female stereotypes.

In the last 10-15 pages, the hero has to explain what happened, which is never a sign that the author did a

good job in the first 150, but it's a zippy enough little story if you ignore the whole Aryan Brotherhood angle ...

It's barely worth two stars (one star if it was longer) ... I almost gave it a third because, having grown up on sci-fi written at about the same time, it *feels* like science fiction should. But when I sat down to write who I would recommend it to, I had to put down "teenage racists," which cost it the bonus point.

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### **Dayna Smith says**

One of Miss D's favorite science fiction authors, Dickson is also the author of Miss D's favorite science fiction novel, *The Right To Arm Bears*. *Wolfling* is the story of Jim Keil, who is sent from Earth to the Throne World to observe the High-born and determine if Earthlings are indeed descendants of these advanced beings. He becomes involved in a plot against the High-born Emperor that may destroy both the Throne World and Earth. Dickson is rated 9th grade merely for reading level. There is no profanity or mature content of any kind in this book. If you love hard core science fiction, you will love Dickson.

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### **Stephanie says**

This short novel is about Jim Keil, an earth born human trained on Alpha Centauri III to be a spy. His mission is to impress Princess Afuan with his bullfighting skills enough to gain passage to the Throne World. That is where the High-born live and rule the empire. The reason Earth wants Jim to spy on the High-born is to determine if Earth, who was recently re-discovered by the Empire, really is a lost world of the Empire or if it evolved entirely on its own and does not have to be part of the Empire.

The story proceeds with Jim getting to the Throne World and immediately being embroiled in a plot by certain High-borns to overthrow the Emperor. Jim proves to be more than a "Wolfling" and impresses a few High-born enough to be nominated for adoption into the Throne World. This privilege allows him to get close to many key players and in the end resolves the plot.

He then goes back to Earth and is tried for treason because he went far afield of his original assignment. The trial and revelations about Jim are interesting.

I liked this book even though the ending could have been a little better but it was still very satisfying. Dickson uses the short length of the novel to keep the pace brisk and very little fluff is in this book. I have found that most novels of this time period in scifi were brief. The market then wanted these books and authors of the time were skilled at delivering taut plots and great stories. Today's bigger novels are not necessarily better for their girth but that is what the market requires so that what is written.

Dickson is better known for the Dorsai novels but he wrote many stand-alones like this and I have enjoyed the few I have read. One day I will get around to reading the Dorsai books.

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### **Allen Smeltzer says**

An anthropologist chosen to be a spy, and

trained as a matador.....all to discover what earth has in connection with its new imperialistic overlords. Not a bad book but a little too short. I think it kinda suffers from the Sherlock short story syndrome....the one where the only real discovery of plot is revealed by the main character at end. The characters where a bit flat, but the settings where interesting. To be honest I picked this book up because I liked the title, the cover art, and it was only 25 cents. It's the first of G.R. Dickson's work I've read and after a brief search I think I'll read "The Right to Arm Bears" at a later date. I mean what a great title.

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### **R.K. Goff says**

G rated--  
Meh.

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### **Stan Semerod says**

Great story of the underdog gladiator trying to triumph over the ruling class. A sci-fi Spartacus.

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### **Howard says**

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### **mark monday says**

DEAR GOODREADS REVIEWERS NAMED RANDAL AND ALL OTHER GOODREADS REVIEWERS AS WELL: Please do not label a book that features racist characters as a racist book. *There is a fucking difference between the characters in a book and the book itself!* The "High Born" of Throne World are expressly referred to as a decadent aristocracy - on the cover of the book for crissakes - whose control of an empire is on the verge of collapse. Recommending a book that features self-serving, genetically "pure" white imperials as being for "teenage racists" is so completely nonsensical that all I can do is laugh and then write this little rant. Teenage racists will surely be bitterly disappointed if they pick up this book based on Randal's recommendation! Perhaps the reviewer is attempting to lead teenage racists astray. Well I suppose that isn't such a bad thing now that I think about it. Okay Randal, you accidentally did a good thing there.

Anyway, the most interesting thing to me about Dickson's slim, trim, stripped-down scifi adventure is its basis in cultural anthropology. Our hero is so very, very careful in his assessment of the world he finds himself in. I enjoyed how deliberate he was when analyzing this looming threat to Earth, which made the force of his conclusions (when they finally do occur) particularly striking. Jim Keil's chilly intellect and his refusal to get emotional - even when questioned by doltish Earth officials during the overly long denouement - made him a fascinating protagonist. The author's portrait of an aristocracy destined for eventual failure was quite absorbing and I especially enjoyed its centralization of the anthropological term *noyau* as the key reason why the High Born will not rule for much longer. The word *noyau* is a label to delineate "a society of inward antagonism"... suitable for describing such things as the internecine intrigues of Rome's court before its fall, the structure of the reality game show *The Apprentice*, the current socio-political climate of the U.S.

and many other countries, and the territorial behavior of most monkeys and perhaps primates in general.

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## **J says**

Not expressly labeled as a young adult novel but in no way is it beyond the scope or range of such. The story is somewhat simple and straight forward, also containing a bit of mystery which is pretty predictable over all. The science fiction is more like a light glazing and requires this classification based on the setting of the novel more than the technology therein.

The book consists of a single protagonist who is sent on a mission to a far off planet to determine the cause of the residents' stark similarity to Earthly man. He is quickly caught up in the political intrigue and turbulence that is unfolding on the "Throne World" of an interstellar empire.

Jim, the protagonist, is entirely too confident and conveniently skilled and aware to ever really feel realistic. Reasons exist for his profound abilities and temperament, but again they fall into the same convenience as the rest of his makeup.

It is written well enough that a reader looking for a quick and short adventure without too much depth could and probably would enjoy it. There is a bit of repetitiveness in the way the author rolled from one sentence to another implying perhaps a lackluster editor or proofreader.

Not a great and memorable experience, but not bad by any real determinant factors. The characters carry the same attributes and while they were not devoid of development they were not memorable or even substantial. Three stars for a YA level reader.

Two stars for anyone else who is just looking for something casual.

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## **Travis says**

I read this story in college when I found issues of Analog in a used bookstore in town. Loved the story then, and still love it now. An excellent story, and one to inspire hope in us all. Highly recommended.

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## **Jim says**

It was a great read. It's short, action-packed, & has an Earthman kicking ass despite all odds, a real blast from the past & quite politically incorrect. It starts out with bull fighting, a cultural art that gets our hero to the alien home world where the ruling caste, the High-Born, have genetically manipulated themselves into the fastest, smartest, tallest, & whitest of all people. They breed other races/versions of men into specific roles.

One of the best parts was the duel that read very much like a lightsaber duel, but it was written almost a decade before Star Wars came out.

I added this back when I first joined GR as a book I really liked, but it's been years since I read it. In the spirit of justifying my overflowing bookshelves, I thought I should go back & read some like this, a thin paperback that I probably bought new in 1969 for 50¢ according to the price marked on the cover. I'm so glad I kept it & will continue to do so.

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## **Peter Flom says**

In this fairly far future SF, there is a galactic civilization ruled by beings from the Throne World. The protagonist, Will, is selected and trained to go the Throne World. He uncovers multiple plots among the super-beings who rule there. The book seems somewhat unbelievable, but Dickson ties it all together in the end.

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