

A Night in the Lonesome October

Roger Zelazny , Gahan Wilson (Illustrator) , James Warhola (cover artist)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

A Night in the Lonesome October

Roger Zelazny , Gahan Wilson (Illustrator) , James Warhola (cover artist)

A Night in the Lonesome October Roger Zelazny , Gahan Wilson (Illustrator) , James Warhola (cover artist)

The bestselling author of the Amber series creates a delightful and dramatic period fantasy populated by talking dogs and characters from popular legend. Accompanying and amplifying the text are a series of 31 full-page illustrations by one of the masters of bizarre and horrific art.

A Night in the Lonesome October Details


Date : Published September 1st 1994 by Avon Books (Mm) (first published 1993)

ISBN : 9780380771417

Author : Roger Zelazny , Gahan Wilson (Illustrator) , James Warhola (cover artist)

Format : Paperback 280 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Horror, Fiction, Humor, Mystery, Holiday, Halloween, Science Fiction

 [Download A Night in the Lonesome October ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online A Night in the Lonesome October ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online A Night in the Lonesome October Roger Zelazny , Gahan Wilson (Illustrator) , James Warhola (cover artist)

From Reader Review A Night in the Lonesome October for online ebook

Nataliya says

"Carpe baculum!" (Seize the stick!)

You know the feeling when you finish the book and with a quiet satisfied and slightly smug smile realize that **it was just perfect**, as though it was written just for you? Sometimes I get lucky like that.

Roger Zelazny has a unique quirkiness in his narration that speaks directly to me, and *A Night in the Lonesome October* which I read in one breath over the wee hours of a late October night is no exception.

Zelazny is a genius when it comes to telling a story. The trick here is the narration - **the wonderful, clever narration that gives you zero exposition but instead throws you into the thick of events to let you sink or swim**, and once you decide to swim you get a slow trickle of hints and clues along the way until you reach a point where you no longer remember how exactly you figured out all the goings-on - or rather not all but some, as even after the wrap-up there remain the unexplored paths and corners that make you realize that you just barely scratched the surface under which there are more tantalizing depths.

All of this is infused with clever, wry, and sometimes dark humor and peppered with smart allusions that feel organic and not, as in the hands of a less skilled writer they could be, pretentious. And eventually a vivid picture full of Zelazny's sophisticated and crisp imagery emerges - **a much bigger and fuller picture than anything initially suggested, and it's lovely and menacing and dark and light at the same time**. And I love it.

It's a light and clever tale with Lovecraftian overtones, set in the whereabouts of London in the late Victorian era and featuring a mishmash of the beloved and not-so-beloved characters of that time: Jack (the Ripper), Larry Talbot (The Wolfman), the Great Detective (Sherlock Holmes), the Count (Dracula), the Good Doctor (Frankenstein) and such, all gathered with their familiars for a "**Game**" played a few times a century when full moon falls on October 31st, a Game which can decide the fate of the world, a Game full of bizarre rituals and "*lunatic scavenger hunts*", a Game which may or may not open the way into our world to the Elder Gods. In the Game it is a well-kept secret which player is on which side, and the location of the grand showdown needs to be figured out quickly but keeps shifting depending on which players choose to join.

And sometimes there just may be a hilarious body parts exchange during frantic digging in the cemetery that made me choke with laughter sometime around 3 am:

"Damn! I need a left femur and this one ain't got one!"

"Left femur, you say?" came an ancient croaking voice from nearby, which could have been Owen's. "I've one right here I ain't usin'. Have you a liver, though? That's my need."

"Easily done!" came the reply. "Bide a moment. There! Trade?"

"You have it! Catch!"

Something flashed through the air to rattle farther down the hill, followed by scurrying sounds.

"Fair enough! Here's yer liver!"

There came a splan from higher up and a muttered "Got it!"

"Hey!" came a lady's voice then, from off to the left. "While you're about it, have you a skull?"

"Indeed I do!" said the second man. "What'll you give?"

"What do you need?"

"Fingerbones!"

"Done! I'll tie 'em together with a piece of twine!"

"Here's your skull!"

"Got it! Yours'll be along shortly!"

"Has anyone the broken vertebrae of a hanged man?" came a deep masculine voice with a Hungarian accent, from somewhere far to the right."

And who is better to figure out the plot threads than **our narrator, a gifted thaumaturgical calculator, also known as Snuff, Jack Ripper's dog (or perhaps, a tad more than your usual canine)**, the spy, the plotter, and the only one to keep in check the menaces of "*the Thing in the Circle, the Thing in the Wardrobe, and the Thing in the Steamer Trunk, not to mention the Things in the Mirror.*" Snuff, whose keen sense for animal politics and a knack for knowing when to form alliances with the other familiars (Bubo the rat making me laugh!) and when to strategically share information may be the deciding factor in the battle for the fate of this world. Snuff, whom I love dearly even though I'm decidedly not a "dog person".

"Hi. I'm a watchdog."

"Me, too."

"I've been watching you."

"And I've been watching you."

"Why is your person digging a big hole?"

"There are some things down there that he needs."

"Oh. I don't think he's supposed to be doing that."

"May I see your teeth?"

"Yes. Here. May I see yours?"

"Of course."

"Perhaps it's all right. Do you think you might leave a large bone somewhere nearby?"

Yes, Roger Zelazny is indeed a genius who clearly had such a great time writing this story that the fun is infectious. Whichever genre this little gem of a book falls in - comedy or Gothic horror or detective mystery - there is no doubt that it's the work of a confident master and a delight to read, especially on a dark and lonesome late October night.

*"I took Jack his slippers this evening and lay at his feet before a roaring fire while he smoked his pipe, sipped sherry, and read the newspaper. He read aloud everything involving killings, arsons, mutilations, grave robberies, church desecrations, and unusual thefts. **It is very pleasant just being domestic sometimes.**"*

Layla * Praise the sun * says

Halloween buddy read with some of my awesome goodreads friends.

*Growing moon. Angry cat. Feather in the wind.
Autumn comes. The grass dies.*

"A Night in the Lonesome October" is *a very different book in so many ways. In so many good ways .*

It is written from a dog's point of view and consists of a prologue plus 31 chapters, one chapter for each day

of October.

You have no idea what is going on in the major part of the book, but instead you come across all sorts of characters that you might for instance know from other books or the real world (Jack the Ripper says hi is all I'll say) as you gather hints and clues as to what exactly is happening here.

Many of those hints are so subtle, it's simply brilliant, which is why I will not say more about the plot here. It would already give away way too much.

While the book is a quick read and seems rather light and funny on the surface, it is really pretty creepy and touches upon topics such as vivisection, murder and grave-robbing. At times it feels surrealistic, other times it is poetic and heartbreaking, too.

He cared about people, about the whole world. What's that human notion—compassion. He had a lot of that. It's one of the reasons he drank a lot, I think. He felt everybody else's pain too much.

In short, it makes you feel all the feels - if you let it do so.

I felt a strong desire to howl at the moon. It was such a howlable moon.

I feel that I could never do a book such as this credit with my limited ability to express myself by writing a review for it, so I will leave it to you now to pick it up and see for yourself, because you definitely should.

Last, but not least, thank you, Evgeny, for drawing this book to my attention, and for the hints you gave us. I would have missed so many of them had it not been for you.

Jim says

Oct2017: Reading yet again with Fantasy Book Club. Many thanks to Helen for inviting me to read along. It is in memory of Brenda who recently lost a battle to cancer & this was one of her favorite books. Mine too, obviously. Definitely a Halloween tradition. I must watch "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" tonight. The one with Tim Curry, of course.

It was a great read with a great bunch of people. I added some to my notes & we relabeled the characters on the front cover due to a great insight by Anna. She saw the characters as grouped by their roles in the story. That's a major spoiler, so don't look until you've read the book, but it makes so much sense. It leaves the Great Detective unaccounted for & possibly one extra character on the far left. My guess is he is disguised as the waiter & the Inspector is peeking in.

<https://www.goodreads.com/photo/group...>

James Warhola finally looked through his old boxes (6 years of nagging!) & found the folder for this book. No notes, but he did find some sketches. There are 5 of them posted in the Zelazny group's photos here:

<https://www.goodreads.com/photo/group...>

Oct2011: I made up a set of notes this year from discussions over the past couple of years in the Roger Zelazny group here:

<http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/2...>

This year we discussed the cover art & I even traded some emails with James Warhola. Hopefully he'll remember to look up his notes & fill me in on who is who. While some of the characters are obvious, several are not. Here's the full picture, much of which is cut out on the cover:

<http://www.full-wallpaper.com/affiche...>

As always, it was a very enjoyable read & I actually managed to limit myself to one chapter a day. I picked up a few more tidbits this year, which is pretty amazing. As fun as it is to read just the obvious story, the subtleties make it even better.

Oct2009: What a fantastic read for October, especially if done one day at a time while discussing with others. That allows plenty of time for reflection on the various clues, trying to figure out who the characters are & what the Game is about.

The book is a 'lunatic scavenger hunt' drawing characters & the setting from a lot of classical sources. H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu myths are a core component with players mostly from Victorian England classics; Jack the Ripper, Sherlock Holmes, Victor Frankenstein, Dracula & more. Few are named directly & some are tough to figure out, but it makes for a very fun read.

We summarized the book, one day at a time, discussing the characters, their names & more about the book in the Roger Zelazny group in the spoiler topic.

<http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/2...>

Celeste says

Actual rating: 3.5

I actually managed to stick to the one chapter a day format of this book, which made for a fun little adventure.

This is the second Zelazny novel I've read, having only dipped my toe into his Chronicles of Amber with the first book. Zelazny is a science fiction and fantasy forefather of the 1960s through the 1980s, having influenced the likes of Neil Gaiman and George R.R. Martin. He won 3 Nebula Awards and 6 Hugo Awards, and is most famous for his Chronicles of Amber. In other words, we have him to thank for some of the stories and authors that we as SFF fans love so much.

I didn't love this little book, but I liked it. The aforementioned format was engaging and unique, and the plot was very original. But those were honestly my two favorite aspects of the book. Snuff, our canine narrator, was an entertaining and charming, and the Game he was involved in remained mysterious even at the novel's end. All of the players were well known characters or tropes from classic horror fiction, which added to the fun factor. For a Game that had a possibly apocalyptic outcome, the way the story was told seemed very slice-of-life, which removed some of the tension needed to fully absorb a reader in a cosmic conflict.

A Night in the Lonesome October was a light October read, perfect for getting into the spirit of the season. It just left me wanting a bit more.

Evgeny says

Review updated yet again on October 26, 2017

A group read with some of my greatest friends: Choko, Layla, and Tadiana. I will add more people to the list when they finish their reading.

The most common cover of the book is so perfect I cannot help showing it here.

Half of the fun in most of Zelazny's books is to figure out what is going on. For this reason I have to be as obscure as possible. Imagine Jack the Ripper, Sherlock Holmes, Count Dracula, Dr. Frankenstein, Rasputin, Larry Talbot (if you do not know who he is, I am not giving a spoiler), and some other well-known and interesting characters gather in one place waiting for the Halloween night when they are supposed to do something. The tale is told from a dog's POV who for some reason reminds me of following:

Are you confused? Sorry, this is the best I can do. If you are really lost everything will be explained later in the book.

The tale is fairly lighthearted with quite a few jokes and puns, but when you stop to think about it, the plot is actually quite spooky. It takes a real master writer of Zelazny's caliber to make it work - and it does work, even when it seemingly goes over the top. The author pays homage to the creators of all of the characters I mentioned above as well as Poe, Bradbury, and Lovecraft (Cthulhu makes a brief appearance as well); I am sure I missed somebody.

After I finished reading the book the first time I was wondering why in the world I have not read it earlier - several times. After the initial confusion there came a moment when I realized I really do not want to put the book down. Fortunately, Zelazny was also the master of cramping a lot of thoughts and plot movements into a very limited number of pages, so I still had several hours of much needed sleep left when I finished reading - going to bed before that was totally out of question. This is my third reading and I still manage to find some hidden meanings and foreshadowing I overlooked before. It is probably safe to say the book became my traditional Halloween read.

In conclusion, if you are looking for a spooky Halloween read, look no further.

Heck, if you are looking just for any good read, look no further as well. Just read the book. You will not regret it.

Stepheny says

3.5

I read A Night in the Lonesome October with some of my favorite gal pals on goodreads. I wasn't quite sure what to expect but what I got was not at all what I had imagined.

The story is told in 31 chapters- each one is a day in October. You are following around Snuff, a watchdog who tells you all about his adventures for the day. There are other animals that are in the story as well working with their human companion to collect items and information for what they refer to as "The Game".

Imagine going to a movie theater and sitting down in your seat with your supersized popcorn, box of milk

duds and your \$18 bottle of water only to find you forgot your glasses in the car. (I don't wear glasses either, but just go along with it for a minute and pretend your eyes suck). You're all cozy, everyone is gathered in to watch the movie. You don't want to be the jerk that gets up and interrupts everyone to ask what the hell is going on, or that blocks the view for someone else so you sit patiently hoping you can figure out enough from the dialogue. With 15 minutes left in the movie you decide to reach in your bag and get your keys out so you can try to beat the rush. Upon reaching in your bag you find your damn glasses. Sure, it's great that you can NOW see the movie, but most of it has been lost in a haze.

That's exactly how I feel about this book. I don't know if I am too dumb to pick up on all of the references but apparently everyone else who read this book figured out that Snuff was Jack the Ripper's dog. I never made that connection and we can blame that on my blonde roots I guess.

Overall I enjoyed the story. I mostly loved the kitty because I love kitties. The friendship between the animals, even ones who were on opposing sides of "The Game" was truly great. I felt like I missed a lot in this book though and I'm not quite sure why. Maybe it's me or my ignorance of historical references? Maybe it's the subtle writing technique that Mr. Zelazny employed? Maybe a combination of both?

Once I got to the ending and realized what "the Game" actually was, it helped clear up some of the fog that had blocked my view. But not all of it. I'll most likely go back at some point, maybe on a lonesome night in October, and give it another shot now that it's all been spelled out for me. I want to thank my Goodreads Gal Pals for encouraging me to try new things and especially thanks to Delee for choosing this particular book. It was such a fun read even though I wasn't smart enough to pick up on all the references!

Robin (Bridge Four) says

I used to watch How I Met Your Mother and loved all the various challenges that Barney took on because someone in the group said there was no way he could do it. Like picking up girls in overalls or licking the Liberty Bell. **So in my head this is how Roger Zelazny responded when someone told him it would be impossible to make Jack the Ripper into a good guy.**

I always try to read something for the Halloween season. Horror isn't exactly my genre so I attempt to pick something more mysterious than scary and this fit that bill to a T.

There are a few things that are done really well in this story. First the narrator is a dog, but not just any dog but one with some sort of ties to the supernatural and he is companion to none other than Jack *the Ripper* but that is never clearly stated. Still it gives a different and unique perspective on his activities.

The Second is that all the players in the story are from those old horror movies I watched as a kid including Dr. Frankenstein, Rasputin, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Sherlock Holmes, the original Wolf Man, Count Dracula and more. Each one has their own pet familiar AND is working for a big event on Halloween to either release a great power or keep it where it is. Until very close to the end it is hard to say who is on which side.

The Third thing I enjoyed about this set up is that nothing is told to you. Everything is shown and the story

teases out a little at a time with hints here and there but nothing overt. Which leads to some pretty big surprises at the end and a twist I really didn't see coming.

Overall Mr. Zelazny sold it to me that Jack wasn't necessarily a bad guy. And I admittedly ended up reading some of the lore on a few of the other characters in the book which added to the Halloween fun of it.

The main reason that this didn't get a full 5 stars is the very abrupt end. I thought there would be an epilogue of sorts and there isn't. I really wanted to know what happened to a few of the other characters but it is left to my own imagination.

Still if Horror really isn't your thing and you want something somewhat funny and mysterious then this could definitely add to your enjoyment of October.

Vishnu Chevli says

Imagine a brave Scooby-Doo at Work

I rarely get chance to read a highly admired book. "A Night in the Lonesome October" by Roger Zelazny is my first review read from Netgalley. Whether you call the genre humour or horror or lovecraftian or mystery, but I am not able to put it into single genre confidently. Unlike my other review reads this book shows clear cut difference between debut author and veteran author.

I think one has to read the book to understand what the story is all about. And many reviewers mentioned that it takes half the novel read to get the idea of the story. I would like to correct it, it took me more than two third of the book to understand what is happening. Story is written from watchdog's point of view. In a certain area of London, during Halloween of 1880's, a group of people (with special powers) gathered to perform a particular ceremony. They call it the Game. Each player has their own companion (animals) who help them during the Game. Players are divided into two groups, the Openers and the Closers. This year's Game became dangerous because of the death of players from both the sides. Snuff, watchdog, and Gray, cat, venture their own adventures during Game to find out truth behind various strange events. You will find all type of characters in story, a magician, a witch, a vampire, a warewolf, a psychopath, a Frankenstein and many more.

There were some illustration given at appropriate places to clear readers doubt. For an example, from an illustration I understood that one player was a vampire, otherwise I would have kept thinking how a person sleeps in coffin under debris. You need a good amount of patience to finish this book. For some it may be nail biting journey and for some it may be sure shot DNFs. Its good that I sustained first 100 pages otherwise I would have put it under DNFs.

Orient says

Evgeny, thanks again for a great recommendation :)

This book is a great blend of mystery spices, gripping suspense, funny dialogues and fabulous fantasy. Mr. Zelazny's writing style just enchanted me: so straightforward, smooth and so compelling at the same time, with no difficult words or complex descriptions. The story simply is a page-turner.

What gripped me in A Night in the Lonesome October? Definitely the talking animals, the monsters (who entertained Snuff with their mad requests and dangerous plans) and the heroes from other famous and classical books. The author borrowed some characters from fabulous classics (Mary Shelley, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker) to create his book as an interesting game. I had so much fun guessing who's who.

The book presented the story of a strange Game, a shrewd and sometimes dangerous fight between two groups of players. When the right time comes, they prepare for one special Night in the Lonesome October when the fate of the world is to be decided. I liked the players and their companions. And the most interesting parts to play, went to the awesome talking companions <3

London had invited a really special group to play the Game. A dangerous gentleman who wanders the streets at night with a knife ((view spoiler)), with his BBF and scheming partner Snuff, a witch in a disguise as a crazy hag, with her comrade sly Graymalk.

Snuff managed all the funny dialogues and I really enjoyed his interaction with others.

I moved in a big circle about the hilltop, pissing on stone after stone as I calculated, partly to keep track of the lines, partly in frustration.

A new form of counting :D well now I know why does my dog have to pee on every bush while going for a walk. :D

*"A chihuahua?" The thing in the circle suggested. "Just for laughs?"
"Nope," I answered. "Language barrier."*

*"Remember what they say about cornered rats," he said. "We can be nasty."
"I'm sure," I replied. "But what'd be the point? No one wants to hurt you."
"You were chasing me."
"I wanted to talk to you."
"So you brought along a cat."
"I can let you talk to her if you don't want to talk to me." I started to withdraw.
"No! Wait! I'd rather talk to you!"*

Not enough interesting characters? Ok, here lurk some other interesting personalities: an alluring, very RIP noble and his night companion Needle, an old witcher and his nutty partner Cheeter; the mad Russian monk ((view spoiler)) with his sneaky hissing BFF Quicklime, a crazy pair of partners, with a whooping comrade Nightwind. Then there is a crazy bloodlusty man of god, with a peculiar companion Tekela. Other colorful personalities: a good doctor with a kindhearted giant and a sneaky Bubo, a furry botanic (I found him a little bit primitive) and a Great Detective, a master of disguise.

The Game is presented quite masterfully, with lots of bits that the reader has to put together to see the whole

puzzle. This story is told from Snuff's POV. I tracked Snuff and the other players in the Game with interested as the story revealed the closeness of great friendships, the great alliances and the nasty treason. The finale revealed some secrets and it was great to have one of the players, I liked, back.

I have only one complaint. Some characters were not fully developed, I would have liked to know more about their past, their stronger sides and weaknesses. This is the last book that Mr. Zelazny finished (moreover it was nominated for the Nebula in 1994) and it's sad that there won't be any sequel to this book.

Jack and Jill went down the hill. Gray and I ran after.

Ana Tijani? says

Jedna od najboljih knjiga koje sam ove godine pro?itala. Zelaznijev stil je jedinstven i neponovljiv.

Delee says

Sooooooooooooooooooooo this was a group read I forced upon my nearest and dearest- I loooooove my GR gals- even if you hated or loved every minute of it ladieeeeeees!!

I am a watchdog. My name is Snuff. I live with my master Jack outside of London now. I like Soho very much at night with its smelly fogs and dark streets. It is silent then and we go for long walks....

The story of A NIGHT IN LONESOME OCTOBER is told in a prologue and thirty-one chapters- one for each day in October. I read it in three...sometimes you just can't wait...

Every once in a while- when the moon is full on a Halloween night- a group gathers and a game begins...The game of saving the world from evil and destruction- who is on the right side and who is on the wrong one??? I guess you will have to read it to find out...

"Hi. I'm a watchdog."

"Me, too."

"I've been watching you."

"And I've been watching you."

"Why is your person digging a big hole?"

"There are some things down there that he needs."

"Oh, I don't think he's supposed to be doing that."

"May I see your teeth?"

"Yes. Here. May I see yours?"

"Of course."

October-1887- a small English village finds itself host to a strange group of visitors. They are players in "The Game", and on the final night- they will declare their allegiances in a contest that will determine the future of the world. Until then- there are mystic artifacts to track down, rituals to complete and allies to make...but appearances can be deceiving- and who they might think of as friends...could be their enemies.

If I can recommend only one book to read in October- this would be it! It may not be for everyone...but it certainly was for me. So much fuuuuuuuuuun!!!

Happy (almost) Halloween!!

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

3.5

I'm a Universal Monster nut. I have the stuffed animal collection, the silver screen box, key chains, artwork for the poster of The Creature from the Black Lagoon signed by the artist (and autographs from Ricou Browning and Julie Adams from a convention on it years later), a few other collectables, the collector box set with statues of Dracula, Frankenstein and The Wolf Man...I'd have much more but, you know, I'm poor.

This book gets brownie points just for including some of these characters. My heart went aflutter seeing the names Count and Larry Talbot. Being told through the points of views of the animals was just another cherry on top of the sundae.

It's a quick read with odd artwork. It's not a children's tale because of the language and content but parts of it reads like one. I think it's because it's capturing the magic of youth and adulthood all in one, something we never really outgrow.

Despite how much I loved about the book, my enjoyment comes to a 3.5 star rating. Not to sound dense, but a lot of the story confused me to tears. There were some parts that dragged a bit as well. I did dig the twist at the end with the count and also loved Jack and his scenes of saving his faithful hound.

Recommended for everyone - Halloween or any time of the year, young or old.

Jim says

An entertaining, interesting story on the face, the understory is even better. Zelazny's sheer number of allusions and amount of sources truly make it a lunatic scavenger hunt that lead to research in some very dark & dusty corners of history, film, myth, & writing.

2012: Re-reading yet again with the Beyond Reality group.

By Day: <http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/1...>

Cover & other Art: <http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/1...>

Both of these topics contain spoilers.

I'm armed with 20 pages of notes & a copy of the cover art. We're having a great discussion with some additional pieces being filled in. This is definitely a book best enjoyed with a mixed group. Those who haven't read it before bring new ways of looking at the mystery as it unfolds & that suggests new avenues of research. All our diverse experience still leaves a few lingering mysteries.

I posted the cover photo with numbers on it for each character & we're trying to figure out who is who. Many are easy, but a few are about impossible. I contacted James Warhola again, but he still doesn't have access to his notes. Maybe next year. Yes, I'll likely read it again that soon, so I had to give it 5 stars. It's a gift that never stops giving.

It was a great discussion & I added some new information to my notes.

2010 & 2011: Read in the Zelazny group. Spoiler topic here:

<http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/2...>

About 150 posts as we dissected the book to find all the allusions & sources Zelazny drew from. Wow!

I wrote up notes & contacted the cover artist Warhola.

2008: Re-reading for the SF/Fantasy monthly & loved it. It's a fast, fun read & has the quality I've come to expect from Zelazny. The story, as one of the character's of the book puts it, is 'a lunatic scavenger hunt' in more ways than one. Who are the people, what are they trying to accomplish - are they good or bad guys? It's also perfect Halloween reading.

There are 31 chapters, one for each day of the month of October during which the story plays out. The early chapters are short, but they grow longer as our understanding of the story progresses - the plot thickens & so do the details.

At first, we're not quite sure what is happening, but the characters are interesting. The story is filled with unlikely heroes & villains who make unlikely alliances & friendships. The characters, their names & other references were fun reading up on. Many are pulled from all over classic horror & the real world. Some I knew, others I vaguely recognized & some I'm still not too certain of. As usual, his novels are worthy of a re-read at a later date.

The copy I have is illustrated in B&W. I didn't care much for them & found them more of a distraction than anything. Usually, I ignored them.

Ivonne Rovira says

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.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Goodness gracious, I am super late writing this review. My schedule just exploded after the middle of October, and I had no time. Because it's been nearly a month, I don't have the best memory of all the plotlines. But I promised I would write a review for every book I read, so better late than never, and my review will be of the more general sort.

I was fortunate to find this at my library and it fit very well thematically into my October Scare Fest reading. I enjoyed it overall. It's an odd little book, no question about it. I would consider it a bit of a pastiche to the famous literary figures of Dracula, Frankenstein and his monster, Sherlock Holmes, Merlin-type druids, and the Wolfman. I rather enjoyed that about this book. What I loved the most is that the narrators are the familiars, or animal companions of the human (or humanlike characters). They all strike up a strange sort of friendship driven by mutual interest and that old adage that drives too many middle grade friendships, especially among girls: better to be friends with someone than to have them as an enemy.

The story's chapters are broken down into each one representing a day in October. They are getting ready for some very important magical event that will have seemingly profound consequences. It sort of reminded me of the Highlander movie where the various characters are pairing off against each other, but this was more of a semi-good versus evil sort of standoff. Just my take. Forgive me if I am way off here. I didn't quite understand all of that, but I don't think it was as important as the unfolding paranormal mystery as various human (or humanlike) characters start to be picked off, one by one. The main character is a dog, who is the familiar of a male wizard. He's an endearing narrator. I liked how he plays dumb dog when necessary, but he's not the average canine (I truly feel some dogs are incredibly intelligent, so don't assume I'm picking on dogs here). I liked his wry and atypical friendship with a cat, who is the familiar of a witch. Along with the fact that their humans are striking up a courtship that may not end well if they end up choosing opposite sides. There is also a bat, rat, snake, and owl character. I'm sorry I don't remember all their names. I do remember the snake's name was Quicklime, so go figure. Strangely enough, the humanlike character who

was most developed was Larry Talbot. Classic horror movie buffs will recognize that name as that of the Wolf Man. He did have the tragic vibe of the character in the movie, but he was quite likable.

This book isn't that deep. I mean it's a short book and probably has some hidden meaning, and I think a very prominent satirical tone that some readers will pick up on immediately. It's not super scary, it's a bit. Enough to make for a nice Halloween read.

I'd say this one is worth tracking down if you can find it at your library. Unfortunately, it's out of print.

A good read for this time of year. And fun for animal lovers like myself.

Choko says

*** 5 +++ ***

A buddy read with the Roger Zelazny Newbies Group, since we wanted to start with a bang!!

Where do I start??? Let's begin with my thanks to Evgeny, who had the good sense to invite several of us for the Halloween Read and made us read it! Thank you!!!

I had no idea what I was getting myself into. After all, I am not a horror reading type of a gal. However, I believe Horror is the last thing I would associate *A Night in Lonesome October* with. The first would be smart and second, funny. It is like a Halloween Scavenger Hunt of Classic Characters, all of them counting the days from the First of October to The Night, the Thirty First.

"... 'I am a watchdog. My name is Snuff.... I fetch things for Jack on occasion—his wand, his big knife with the old writing on the sides. I always know just when he needs them because it is my job to watch and to know. I like being a watchdog better than what I was before he summoned me and gave me this job....' ..."

We are told the story, happening in Victorian London, from the POV of Snuff, the watch dog familiar to Jack of dubious fame from that time period. As I said, the book is loaded with clues and connections, which are a delight to decipher, and I have to say, doing it in a group is much more fun, because if you missed something, your buddy reader might have figured it out and it truly feels like a game! You start from no knowledge at all, and then you get pieces little by little, with every chapter covering a day in October and giving us some more players and clues to go with. It becomes obvious pretty quickly that teams of "openers" or "closers" are being created, but no one knows who is on which team...

"... 'I addressed the squirrel through a hedge:

"Are you in the Game?"

It scurried to the man's nearer shoulder and peered.

"Who asks?" it chattered.

"Call me Snuff," I answered.

"Call me Cheeter," it replied. "Yes, I suppose we are. Last minute thing—rush, rush."

"Opener or closer?"

"Impolite! Impolite to ask! You know that!"

"Just thought I'd try. You could be novices."

"Not new enough to be giving anything away. Leave it at that."

"I will."

"Stay. Is there a black snake in it?"

"You ask me to give something away. But yes, there is: Quicklime. Beware. His master is mad."

"Aren't they all?"

We chuckled and I faded away. "..."

Needless to say, the familiars were the main characters, since we saw everything from the point of view of a dog. This is what made the story even more enchanting than it already would have been, given the brilliant way the author lets us in on it. Snuff is not only a great watch dog and assistant to Jack, he is also a mathematical genius who sees and deciphers patterns and even knows when to act like a lovable goof of a dog too!!! I am in love with this character and if Jack and Jill don't work out, I can take on the care for Snuff and Graymalk the cat at any time - voluntarily, this is how willing I am to work for the greater good!!!

"...""The crazy witch's companion may be running out of steam about now."

"What do you mean?"

"Ding, dong, dell."

"I don't follow you."

"Literally. Pussy's in the well."

"Who threw her in?"

"MacCab, full of sin."

"Where is it?"

"By the outhouse, full of shit. Back of Crazy Jill's place. Keeps it from going dry, I guess." "..."

The banter is almost as awesome as the structure and simplicity of the storytelling. I think half of the book is quotable, but to truly experience it, I would recommend you to get several friends together and read it, preferably some time in October:):):) You will enjoy the way the characters gather their needed materials, which are supposed to be acquired in some very specific ways and times... Zelazny exhibits a particular talent in knowing when less is more and makes our imaginations work overtime with the hints he gives here and there. I am not sure I can find a weakness in the whole thing at all, and I am not even going to look for it. I just enjoyed it and the way it made me always look for the second meaning of every word and hint, making my brain feel full of champagne bubbles and kept me slightly buzzed throughout! Evgeny, you recruited me into the Legions of RZ's fans! Thank you once again!

"...""I took Jack his slippers this evening and lay at his feet before a roaring fire while he smoked his pipe, sipped sherry, and read the newspaper. He read aloud everything involving killings, arsons, mutilations, grave robberies, church desecrations, and unusual thefts. It is very pleasant just being domestic sometimes." "..."

Now I wish you all Happy Reading and many more wonderful books to come!!!

Dan Schwent says

A Night in the Lonesome October is about a gateway to a dimension of Lovecraftian horrors and the two opposing forces dedicated to opening the gate or making sure it stays closed. The story is told from the point of view of Jack the Ripper's dog Snuff. Yeah, you read that right.

I was hooked right away, around the time Snuff and the graveyard dog had a funny conversation and asked to see one another's teeth. One of the characters calls The Game, as it is known, a lunatic scavenger hunt. That's pretty much what it is. Snuff spends most of the book calculating where the gateway will appear, having to recalculate every time a player turns up dead...

One of the best parts of A Night in the Lonesome October is trying to figure out which characters are actually participants in The Game, and which side they are on.

I enjoyed seeing classic horror characters like Count Dracula, Larry Talbot, and Frankenstein's monster in the same story as Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper. Through in the Cthulhu mythos and you have a ripping good yarn.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

Final review, just in time for Halloween! First posted on Fantasy Literature:

During the entire month of October, in the late 1800s, in a year when the full moon falls on Halloween, strange forces gather in a village outside of London.

Various iconic characters ? who will be familiar to fans of Victorian literature and classic horror movies ? create shifting alliances, gather herbs, instruments of power and the odd eyeball and femur, and prepare for a mystery-shrouded event that will take place on Halloween night.

A Night in the Lonesome October, published in 1993, is narrated by the aptly-named Snuff, a dog who is the familiar of a man named Jack. Snuff is more than just a dog; at the beginning of the novel he comments cryptically, "I like being a watchdog better than what I was before he summoned me and gave me this job." Snuff helps Jack gather ingredients for Halloween night, keeps an watchful eye on various cursed Things trapped in Jack's house, and draws lines between the houses of the various players to create a diagram that will help him and Jack in their planning for ... whatever it is that will happen on Halloween.

Snuff also cautiously communicates with other animals in the neighborhood: Quicklime, a black snake belonging to a mad monk named Rastov; Graymalk the cat, who is the familiar of a witch called Crazy Jill; a rat named Bubo who lives with a man called the "Good Doctor"; Needle, a bat who associates with the Count; and others. Snuff explains that it's complicated at the beginning of the month because he has no way of knowing whether these people and their familiars are "openers" or "closers." What openers and closers are remains mysterious until much later in the story, but it's clear it's at the root of the great Game they are playing and the ultimate contest to occur between the players on Halloween night. Meanwhile, the Great Detective lurks about the area with his companion, occasionally donning disguises in the course of his investigation (which don't fool Snuff, of course).

A Night in the Lonesome October is creepy yet humorous, gruesome and witty at the same time. One of the highlights is a grave-robbing scene in which several players spend an evening gathering ingredients, with various bodily parts flying through the air in a macabre game of catch:

"Eyeballs, anyone?" came a call.

"Over here," said someone with a Russian accent. "One of them, please."

"I'll have the other," came an aristocratic voice from the opposite direction.

"Either of you got a couple of floating ribs, or a pair of kidneys?"

"Down here, on the kidneys!" came a new voice. "And I'm in need of a patella!"

"What's that?"

"Knee bone!"

"Oh? No problem...."

Roger Zelazny cheerfully hides identities and key plot points from his readers during the early part of the Game, allowing us to work out for ourselves who and what they are, whether they're working for good or evil, and what exactly is going down on Halloween night. The Count and the Great Detective are fairly easy, Jack and the Good Doctor probably won't take a whole lot longer, and Larry Talbot reveals himself fairly early on (even if you're not already familiar with his name). But most of the others will take more puzzling out. Fans of *A Night in the Lonesome October*, which has developed a cult following, devote entire web pages to analyzing the identities of and inspirations for various minor characters (you should check these pages out only after you've finished the book, as they're riddled with spoilers). It was delightful to read and unpack all the layers of meaning hidden in the text. Any book that reveals more and more layers and depth and connections, as you reread and analyze it, gets a large rating boost from me. I'll freely admit that it brought back the best of my memories of deep discussions in college English lit courses.

The characterization is excellent. Minor characters like the Count and the Great Detective shine in their limited but key scenes, surprising us at key turns. Snuff, despite his intelligence and sense of humor, remains clearly a dog in his nature and concerns. His gradually developing alliance and even friendship with the cat Graymalk reminded me of the relationship between my own family's Siamese mix cat and Labrador retriever. Snuff's master Jack is intelligent and kind but is also, Snuff explains, "under a curse from long ago and must do much of his work at night to keep worse things from happening." Jack and Snuff get along very well.

I took Jack his slippers this evening and lay at his feet before a roaring fire while he smoked his pipe, sipped sherry, and read the newspaper. He read aloud everything involving killings, arsons, mutilations, grave robberies, church desecrations, and unusual thefts. It is very pleasant just being domestic sometimes.

There's a longstanding rumor (which, as far as I can tell, has never been confirmed) that *A Night in the Lonesome October* arose out of a bet someone made with Zelazny that he couldn't write a story where readers would root for Jack the Ripper. I think you would be hard-pressed to find a reader who would claim Zelazny lost that bet.

There are 31 chapters in *A Night in the Lonesome October*, one for each day in October. It's great pulpy fun, but with an underlying intelligence and dry humor. I can see why reading *A Night in the Lonesome October* has become an annual October ritual for so many fans! Anyone care to join me next year?

Thanks to Evgeny and the buddy read with the Roger Zelazny Newbie group!

Carol. says

Zelazny is a genius... although I have a sneaking suspicion his genius may be drug related. Where else would you come up with the idea of telling a Victorian mystery-humor-horror story from the point of view of a dog?

The first clue of the kind of upcoming weirdness comes from the dedication, which is to Shelley, Poe, Stoker, Doyle, Lovecraft, Bradbury, Bloch, and Terhune (dog breeder and writer). That means not only does the cast of characters include the watchdog Snuff, and his master, Jack, a man who is particularly talented with a knife, but a host of horror and mystery classics. The Great Detective and his sidekick are in the vicinity, investigating the sudden uptick in activity and maybe solve a murder or two. The Count drops by in his flowing, dark glory. The Good Doctor has moved into a nearby farmhouse looking for some quiet space in which to conduct various experiments using lightening. Is it any surprise he has a misshapen dwarf sidekick and an experiment man? And perhaps, in the vein of Bloch, there's a bad pun or two--really,

Zelazny, *really??*

The structure is the daily dairy of a mathematically-talented watchdog, Snuff, as he and Jack prepare for a final confrontation on October 31 between those who would open a door to other worlds and those who would keep it closed. Spell and geographical preparations need to be made while strategizing against the other participants. I have to admire how Zelazny takes simple sentence structure to initially build believability in a dog narrator (although, to be fair, there are hints he might be more than canine), but by story end, he is at his usual level of sophistication and imagery. Actually, the sense-world of the canine rather lends itself to Zelazny's imagery.

Underneath the spell-preparing shenanigans is the building of a serious conflict. Preparations make for strange bedfellows, and Snuff finds himself relying on Ms. Greymalk the cat. He also interacts with a variety of other animal companions to the main human(?) players.

Zelazny must of had a blast writing this. There's amusing variations on a theme wandering through the month. Notable are the many disguises of the Great Detective, and the variety of injuries his companion displays. There's a particularly fun ongoing riff using the Things that Jack and Snuff guard. The Things in the Mirror, Thing in the Wardrobe, the Thing in the Steamer Trunk and the Thing in the Circle downstairs are always trying to escape, but are kept under control by Snuff's ferociousness. The Thing in the Circle has settled for deception as its escape strategy, and daily turns into some type of dog, hoping to tempt Snuff.

"Down in the cellar the Thing in the Circle had become a Pekingese.

'You like little ladies?' it asked. 'Come and get it, big fella.'

It still smelled of Thing rather than dog.

'You're not really very bright,' I said.

The Peke gave me the paw as I departed, and it's hard to turn your leg that way."

Why not five stars? Well, there is a section where Zelazny indulges in his trademark other-world building that didn't seem to be particularly germane to the narrative. While a fun read, it just didn't hit '5' on my 'must own now' scale, but I'd rate it at 4 and a half stars. A lot of fun, worth a read or two and I'd certainly give it space if a cheap copy came my way--it could nestle up to the Amber series and his short story books I already own.

Cross posted at <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2012/1...>

XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says

► **Everyone Luuuuurved It But Me Now that's a Surprise Buddy Read** (ELIBMNtaSBR™) with Evgeny (aka The Culprit), Tadiana, Choko, Layla, Maria and Robin.

So **this was me** while I was reading this book:

~~Simple~~ **Needless to say**, I wasn't in the best of dispositions to read this **classic Halloween read**. By the way, worry not for I am not going to explain again how **slightly pointless** the whole Halloween read thing is to me, because been there done that and all that crap. Anyway, Halloween + **Evgeny's disastrous influence on my reading life** = here we are.

First off, I should mention that I've had too much whisky I usually have a **very low tolerance for animals in books** (view spoiler). So imagine my cry of utter delight when I realized this story was told **from a charming dog's POV**. I mean, I was totally, like, YAY and stuff (view spoiler). BUT. I must admit that Snuff, the dog in question, is **pretty cool**. He happens to be Jack the ~~Stripper~~ Ripper's dog, which worked a lot in his favor, **for obvious homicidal reasons**. You would think that good old Jack would have picked a **more badass name** for his dog, by the way. Like, I don't know, Cleaver or Butcher or Cutter or something. But I guess you can't have everything. Anyway, the dog is pretty **smart and witty and bearable** for a pathetic animal, so I survived reading from his POV. Not only that, I also managed to make it **relatively unscarred** to the very last page, despite half of the cast being **bloody shrimping fauna material!** Nothing short of a miracle, if you ask me. **Allelujah to our Lord Shrimp and stuff**.

So yes, as much as I am loathe to admit, the animals in this story are **pretty cool**. They are actually **more interesting** than the, um, human characters in the story. Which is a shame considering the cast consists not only of our chum **Jack**, but also of Count ~~Premolar~~ **Dracula**, Dr ~~It's Alive~~ **Frankenstein** (and his baby, of course), **Rasputin** of the Super Hot Sexy Beard, ~~Benedryl Cabbagepatch~~ ~~Benedict Cumberbatch~~ **Sherlock** Himself, a guy called **Spoiler Spoiler Spoiler** (not his real name) and a whole bunch of other people. A whole bunch of **very male people**, I might add, and **only one bloody shrimping woman**. Which is slightly **not cool**, Mr Zelazny. The shrimps are not pleased. And neither am I (view spoiler)

. Anyway, with such an **awesome clique of awesome characters**, you'd think the book would be, you know, awesome and stuff, right? Right. Ha. **Wrong**. I mean, it's definitely not bad, and the writing is really **good and humorous and witty and clever and stuff** but the whole thing felt kind of *looks around to make sure Evgeny isn't on the premises* *whispers* **meh**. I guess I was expecting something **darker and scarier and creepier and horrifyinger** (yes, that is a word) and this just felt terribly *checks behind her back in case Evgeny is trying to cunningly sneak up on her* *whispers* **light and decaf and sugar-free and stuff**.

Yes, that's pretty much how spooky this book was. Ew ew ew.

Some barnacles might say that I didn't fully appreciate the book because it takes ~~bloody ages~~ half of the story for ~~under-performing shrimps like me~~ the reader to understand **what the fish is going on**. Wrong wrong wrong. **The King of Totally Confusing Befuddlement** (KoTCB™), aka Glen Cook, is my master and, let me tell you, I have come out unscathed of much more **perplexingly confounding** tales than this one. It's the lack of confusion I usually find confusion. **So QED and stuff**.

Anything else? Apart from the fact that I obviously read this book wrong, you mean? Nah, don't think so.

» And the moral of this **Eagerly Apprehensively Waiting for Evgeny's Revenge Now That I've Gone and Done the Unthinking Unforgivable and Rated this Much Beloved Book of His Three Pathetic Little Stars Crappy Non Review** (EAWfERNtIGaDtUUaRtMBoHTPLSCNR™) is: I am not worthy. **Obviously**.

P.S. Body parts transactions FTW!

P.P.S. What kind of botched-up ending is this, Mr Zelazny? Just asking for a friend.

P.P.P.S.S.S. Gahan Wilson's illustrations for this book are slightly awesome. And you are slightly welcome.

[**Pre-review nonsense**]

Actual rating: 3.5 stars.

Subcontracting this crappy non-review to Graymalk the cat. She's hard at work right now, and should be able to deliver a **most entertaining reading report** post haste.

► **Full Please Forgive Me Evgeny For I Have Sinned and Failed to Give this Decidedly Not Spooky Tale a 5 Star Rating Blame the Tourist Hordes of Doom Don't Blame Me Crappy Non Review (PFMEFIHSaFtGtDNTTa5SRBtTHoDDBMCNR™) to come.**
