

Gene Wolfe's New Sun stuff (jungles in the Garden)

The SF-Lovers list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 04 Oct 1992

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/sflovers/103>

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Toshi Takeuchi — 04 Oct 1992, 00:58

merritt at milton.u.washington.edu (Ethan Merritt) writes about the jungle area in the garden:

I could never tie up the loose threads in this one. I half suspect that Wolfe was originally heading in another direction in his conception of the panoramas, but changed his mind. For what it's worth I think that the reason that the inhabitants were semi-oblivious to Severian and company was that (1) each panorama sort of exuded a proper mind-set for its setting (2) susceptible passers by were taken up by this and became effectively part of the stage set. I.e. I don't think the people were true originals seen via time travel, I think they were contemporaries of Severian who had gotten caught up in an Ernest Hemmingway look-alike contest imposed by the stage set.

I agree with this to an extent. The strange thing, however, is that Severian saw the "flyer", which I believe was a single propeller airplane, which was delivering mail.

Those people in the hut were then expecting mail and other goods from the plane.

I think the place was meant to be ambiguous, but the people in the set certainly seemed like early 20th century jungle settlers, and the single prop plane seems to show that a glass dome may not have existed, unless he was having a mutual hallucination with the others.

Here's a question in return: at least one of the stories which Severian relates from his little brown book is recognizable - that of Theseus returning without changing his sails. Can the other stories be matched up with tales we already know?

Hmm, I think the quote from Jonas should have been a hint for those of you more literary types. He said something like:

"The king would know that son would come back to Athens with black sails if he failed..."

Toshi