

Robert & Marie musings

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 17 Mar 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1437>

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Tony Ellis — 17 Mar 1999, 13:33

Roy wrote:

In the Jungle Garden scene in *_Shadow_* the woman refers to the man thusly: "My husband wishes..." (p-168)

However, on the penultimate page of *_Claw_*, Sev recalls them as "...the woman and her brother..." Does Sev's famous memory fail him? Did Wolfe screw up?

The latter, I suspect. But, don't forget that there are actually two explanations for what the couple are doing in the Jungle Garden in the first place: Explanation One, that the twisty turny paths of the Garden twist through time as well as space, and Explanation Two that these are actually people from Severian's own time, who are simply "chant-caught". If Explanation Two is the right one, then the couple really could be brother and sister, and just think that they are husband and wife - in which case Sev (and Wolfe) are still right on both counts.

Alga wrote:

John Bishop, corncrake,

You are certainly onto something! Here's just a thought, taken from the Britannica: the explorer-missionary David Livingston's father-in-law, Robert Moffat, was also a missionary to Africa.

Nice idea, but still too long ago to pass my "mail plane" argument. We need to be thinking 1930s or later, I say. And maybe not much later: studying art in Paris, 3-prop mail planes and taking quinine-water for malaria all have a pretty pre-60's feel about them.

This is lots of fun, but in a way I hope we -don't- find out who the couple are. I've always loved this episode for its haunting strangeness: we're in a world so far in the future we can barely imagine it, and here in a hut in the botanic gardens are two people from our own time talking about Paris and reading Deuteronomy. Do we want this explained away?

Peter Stephenson — 17 Mar 1999, 14:05 · follows Tony Ellis

"Tony Ellis" wrote:

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It's not even quite Deuteronomy. The original biblical quotation is about Moses, who isn't mentioned by name in what they're reading --- I forget the term used, it's some generic SF grand-sounding title.

This brings up the question of language. Severian can understand them, and doesn't speak English, French or Zulu; it seems the language used by the three is the local one, with the added touch that the bible comes out a bit weird. Everything in this passage adds weirdness by

the bucketload. I don't think we need to worry too much about it being explained away.

corncrake