

Bungle in the Jungle

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 18 Mar 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1440>

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m.driussi — 18 Mar 1999, 16:59

Just for kicks:

Rather than an "either/or" situation ("either they are chant caught OR there is time travel involved"), experiment with the idea of an "and" situation ("some, but not all, are chant caught AND there is time travel involved"). (Since we know that time traveling buildings exist on Urth--that "fantasy" becomes more concrete as TBOTNS unfolds.)

Of the three it seems that the most likely (yet somewhat counter-intuitive) candidate for "chant caught" is actually Isangoma, since R & M are a pair with a history that includes "Paris" ("we'll always have Paris," heh). So maybe Isangoma is the "chant caught" tourist from Urth--and maybe this would explain how he is able to see Sev and Agia.

But Robert is able to see them too, a bit. Marie is incapable. So the "pairness" of R & M is somewhat illusory: maybe Robert is able to see because of some unusual action he took in the mundane world (i.e., as an art student maybe he ate a hashish brownie that opened the doors of perception), or just because he is a "sensitive artist" type. Or maybe Robert is another tourist from Urth, making the men the "pair."

Yet blindness of this sort would seem to be more an indication of "chant caught" behavior (even though we really don't know what "chant caught" behavior is, exactly). If this is the case, then those who can see Sev and Agia are native to the time/space, and those who are blind are tourists "gone native." So Marie would be the tourist and the other two the locals.

However, this plays hell with all the shared memories of pre-Jungle life between Robert and Marie. (Unless someone is a pod-person who has replaced an "original," ala THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS, but that adds an additional complication which the jungle text doesn't really support . . . unless we consider the Domnina story [ch. 20] as one about pod-people . . . ?)

Another angle: the theme of reincarnation is pretty strong in TBOTNS. Agia says that some people are strongly influenced by a biosphere, and when Severian lingers so long in the desert garden we get that sense of linkage between Sev and biblical lands--by way of reincarnation (he might not be Jesus but there is a sense that he was at least a contemporary of Jesus). So, if we put these two notions (chant caught and reincarnation) together, we might guess that those who become chant caught are reincarnates that have found the landscape of a previous existence and feel at home there; which is chicken-and-egg stuff again (since it erodes the line between tourist and native).

=mantis=