

swing low, sweet chariot

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 14 Aug 1997

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Peter Cash — 14 Aug 1997, 11:54

Alice Turner <al at ny.playboy.com> semaphored with her cilia:

Rock (that makes you a chem; sure you don't want to be Roc?)

You have a PROBLEM with chems? And that's SERGEANT Rock to you, lady!

I'm going to make one last attempt at nailing "Tracking Song," and then move on. Unlike Nutria, I do think it's a religious story, on one level almost an allegory...

Yes! I think you're definitely going in the right direction here; this helps me. Could it be (dare I bring this up? Is this perhaps what you were thinking?) that Cutthroat is a christ-figure? He's been cast down into the fallen world, to share the suffering of its inhabitants--and ultimately to die into a new life. Too pat, probably.

...until what may be the moment of his death, at which time the sought-for home appears. One may somewhat deplore the appearance of a winged being but, in a story by a practicing Catholic, one can hardly ignore it.

If one reads this strictly as a science fiction story, then the sleigh is a death-bed hallucination. It can't be where it is--it can't have circumnavigated (do sleighs navigate?) the world in the time available. Thus, it has to be an illusion. But if this is a religious, allegorical story, then the sleigh is something more: it's a divine or angelic vehicle, come to carry Cutthroat home.

I have to resist the constant temptation to read Wolfe's stories as only what they superficially appear to be: science fiction tales.

Sgt. Rock

P.S. Do you really work for Playboy, alga?

Jim Jordan — 15 Aug 1997, 18:15 · follows Peter Cash

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Just for the record, I did post a some Christ-figure suggestions in one of my posts. Remember, that for Wolfe, Christians are living in imitation of Christ, so all of Wolfe's "Christ figures" are really "Christian figures."

If my post on this did not go through, I can resend it.

Nutria