

Little girl

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 15 Aug 1997

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Alice Turner — 15 Aug 1997, 07:57

mantis, do you think that little girl could have grown up to be Thais? We know nothing about Thais except that she is tall, dark and hollow-cheeked, and shows good sense in bailing...no, I guess Thais is too young. The girl would be at least 60.

But---here's the kind of thing you like!--Urth, p 315, Severian muses on looking like a cutthroat!

-alga-

m.driussi — 15 Aug 1997, 15:16 · follows Alice Turner

Reply: Item #9797840 from URTN at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET01#

alga,

Gene Wolfe is very cagey about those n-th generation prisoners of the antechamber, the ones Jonas talks to and then kind of flips out because of. (Severian is chatted up by relative newcomers Lomer the pedophile (who also appears in "The Cat") and Nicarete the volunteer.)

The n-th generation prisoners seem to be from a starship crew--one of the few clues: the girl says that people in black came to bury "the navigator." They have strange ideas about the outside natural world, e.g. bees and honey, which might be enhanced by their starship origins. Since prisoners in the antechamber are people detained for trespassing or lawbreaking on the grounds of the House Absolute, their ship may have landed or crashed nearby.

When Jonas starts raving, in his mind he is back on a starship. We know that Jonas was in a starship that crashed on Urth and he has been wandering around ever since. Is his mental breakdown due to the fact that he has just met the prisoner descendants of his former crewmates? That having achieved his goal of being reunited with his former crewmates, he finds them changed and in prison, so his dream is dead? (I use this last phrase to note that the oracular brown book story relates to Jonas as well as Severian--the story Severian reads aloud is "The Tale of the Student and His Son." After hearing this tale, Jonas seems to get a grip on himself--in hindsight we can guess that he has recovered from the ruins of his old dream by refocusing on his newer dream of Jolenta. Which is why he is ready to step into the mirrors when he does.)

The real trigger seems to have been the name of their earliest ancestor: Kimleesoong. Jonas seems to have known this person, whose name was common in lands that have since sunk under the sea. So the n-th generation prisoners might also have garbled Asian names, or they might have job titles as names.

What crime did they commit? Because they probably did something.

Maybe just landing on the gardens. Or maybe they were the Adam and Eve colonists at the

dawn of the Age of the Autarch (see "Eschatology and Genesis"): landed in the "Garden," taken prisoner--the seed entombed.

=mantis=