

Little, Big: the magic goes away

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 01 May 2000

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Adam Stephanides — 01 May 2000, 22:45

Alex wrote:

if I recall, we see the "inward vanishing" of the Drinkwater clan into the "Big" world inside ours (with, as Nutria suggests, hints that the "old fairies" went down into a deeper recursive descent). And our world is left poorer.

I agree with the first of these sentences, but not with the second. I don't recall any indication that the presence of the fairies brought any benefits to the world at large, either directly or through the diffusion of enchantment. The world of the final section is impoverished not because of the absence of magic, but because of the real destruction brought about by the civil war that the fairies themselves caused.

The book's final paragraph is beautiful, but it's not an objective comparison between now and then. It's an expression of nostalgia, sharpened by material deprivation; and (I would suggest) a nostalgia as misplaced as the nostalgia for Russell Eigenblick described in "Fifty-two Pickup" (Book Six, Chap. Four).

--Adam