

Suzanne Delage

The Urth list — 2 messages, 1 voices, 20 Aug 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2366>

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Redhaven1 — 20 Aug 2000, 20:41

I haven't posted on this mailing list in a long time, but now I have a question and don't know who else to ask. I'm trying to stay away from WHORL for a while, at least until I read In Green's Jungles. Anyway, I've been reading Endangered Species, a collection of Wolfe's short stories and I ran across this:

"The idea which has so forcibly struck me was simply this: that every man has had in the course of his life some extraordinary experience, some dislocation of all we expect from nature and probability, of such magnitude that he might in his own person serve as a living proof of Hamlet's hackneyed precept-- but that he has, nearly always, been so conditioned to consider himself the most mundane of creatures, that, finding no relationship to the remainder of his life in this extraordinary experience, he has forgotten it."

This quote is from the beginning of a story entitled "Suzanne Delage", published in 1980 in Edges. The story then goes on to describe the narrator's uneventful life and his relationship with a seemingly unnoteworthy woman named Suzanne Delage. I have two questions. The first relates to the quote itself and probably sounds very naive. I'm unfamiliar with much Shakespeare and simply wonder what "Hamlet's hackneyed precept" is and how it relates. My second question is regarding the story itself: does anyone understand it?! And if so, could you please illuminate me? The beginning of the story hints that something fantastic and half-remembered took place in the narrator's life, and as the story progresses you keep waiting for it to be revealed. The narrator however, seems to not remember, or at least only remember pieces. I'm sure there's something in the story but I'm just too dense to realize it. All in all, the story is a riddle, as most of Wolfe's stories seem to be, but I'm not getting this one. (Which is not unusual; I most often am too dense to understand the whole of most of his stories, but just deep enough to enjoy them nonetheless. Not fully understanding is what I believe makes them so appealing to me.) Anyway, I'd appreciate help in understanding this one.

Thanks,
Steve

Redhaven1 — 20 Aug 2000, 20:44 · follows Redhaven1

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