

PEACE frametale

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 27 Oct 2000

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 27 Oct 2000, 13:57

Roy quoted & wrote:

mantis wrote:

This brings up many good points. It also seems like an opportunity to raise the "one stroke or two medical emergencies?" tangle.

Wouldn't you know it; I just happened to have a piece more or less prepared on this topic! Unfortunately, it repeats some of the points mentioned by mantis, but I'm too lazy to change it.

Ah, didn't mean to get in your way there--and oh, look, you've done me one better by writing (more or less; or maybe more, actually!) what I was going to say about the frametale.

So, about the frametale . . what Roy said.

My only additions/quibbles would be about the dead eating and otherwise acting as if they were alive. This is the way the dead are portrayed in classical mythology (remember how the hero has to feed 'em some blood so they can get enough strength/obligation to talk), and Gene Wolfe has used exactly this example in many cases (Earth goddess feeding on human sacrifice in the Soldier book, for example).

So there is precedent for ghosts eating.

I would also like to say that I have some questions about that initial room, the glassed-in porch with fireplace, brick walls, and flagstones on the floor. Is it a normal room or a memory room? (John Weer's house and Mr. Eliot's house are wood; Olivia's house is, or has, brick. The room almost seems like something from the Lorns' farm.) It seems like a normal room, but what sort of a room is it? It almost seems like a hunting lodge (which leads into the Den's daddy thicket). The windows look out onto the garden, and three doors (opposite the windows?) lead to Dining Room, Kitchen, and Den

But it is the presence of the axe that rings the bells for me. The room is located at the back of the mansion (the foyer based upon a child's-view of Blaine's foyer is located in the front: the rooms are not chronological in that regard). Den is at the outer edge of the mansion, and there's the axe he keeps talking about, and he spends an amount of time lingering in the vicinity of the garden and the one room before he starts wandering further in.

"The House of the Axe" is the literal translation of Labyrinth, iirc. So Wolfe is signaling that Den is at the entrance to a maze . . . well, =obviously= . . . and Wolfe also has a track-record of mixing up Daedelus (labyrinth maker) with Minotaur (labyrinth monster/inhabitant) with Theseus (labyrinth visitor).

Roy wrote:

This scene, I believe, is a reenactment of one which occurred at his real office, the day that Dan French told him the Sidhe story and Miss Birkhead died. He suffered a stroke/heart attack, which brought him real-life pain.

He fears Miss Birkhead answering the buzzer instead of Miss Hadow, because he had just learned that Miss Birkhead was dead. If she answered--then he must be dead, too.

I agree. The day of reporter/Dan French/Miss Birkhead death is also Den's last day alive (presumably Den's age 60+); the gap between this day and the "previous" day (Bill Batton/Eleanor Bold/Charlie Turner; Den's age 49; which almost seems like the same day) may be as short as a few months (if the letter is just received that day) or many years (if Den is re-examining the letter rather than reading it the first time).

Doris Corner:

Since Den was going to show the photo of Doris to Miss Birkhead, we can assume (?) that she wouldn't recognize Doris (so Doris isn't Birkhead's baby, for example; nor was Birkhead the fairy godmother who tried to help Doris). When things are this muddled, it is nice to check someone off the list.

=mantis=