

RTTW - two points/questions

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 07 Mar 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3018>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Tom Foster — 07 Mar 2002, 15:07

Well, I've just finished RTTW and am still taking it all in. A couple of things I wanted to mention:

Did anyone else think that the way Hoof talked about Oreb at the end of RTTW was very reminiscent of the way Horn talked about Hyacinth at the end of TBOTLS? Throughout TBOTLS and TBOTSS both Oreb and Hyacinth come across as very likeable characters (though admittedly Hyacinth has some obvious flaws), only for them to be 'debunked' by, in the first case Horn, and in the second case Hoof, come the end of the narratives. This seems very odd and I wonder if there is a deeper meaning to it than simply Wolfe showing that all is not necessarily what it seems, and that people (and animals too!) should not be taken at face value...

Can someone explain to me exactly what the situation with Nettle is come the end of RTTW? I didn't follow this at all, despite re-reading several times. Silk-Horn says (of the information imparted to him by the Red Sun Whorl Scylla) "I would never have used it while Nettle was alive". Later when he asks Daisy to say his goodbyes to Hide and Hoof for him he says that "Nettle is making her own, and cannot be bothered with mine". Then at the very end of the book, Daisy concludes "they are in it, I hope, he and his eerie young woman, Nettle, the old sibyl, and their bird..." How come does he decide to use this information despite Nettle still being alive? Because he finally realises that he is Silk, and is therefore not bound by the same bond to Nettle? And why would Nettle want to go off with him and Seawrack? If anyone can shed some light on this I'd be grateful.

Overall, I really enjoyed the books (not surprisingly since I love pretty much everything Wolfe has written), but I still think overall I preferred TBOTLS (I suspect I'm probably one of the few people who really love TBOTLS, though I hope I'm wrong). I don't think TBOTNS is directly comparable, since it is in a league of its own, somewhat. *Really* looking forward to "The Wizard Knight"...

Tom

Michael Straight — 07 Mar 2002, 15:38 · follows Tom Foster

On Thu, 7 Mar 2002, Tom Foster wrote:

Can someone explain to me exactly what the situation with Nettle is come the end of RTTW? I didn't follow this at all, despite re-reading several times. Silk-Horn says (of the information imparted to him by the Red Sun Whorl Scylla) "I would never have used it while Nettle was alive". Later when he asks Daisy to say his goodbyes to Hide and Hoof for him he says that "Nettle is making her own, and cannot be bothered with mine". Then at the very end of the book, Daisy concludes "they are in it, I hope, he and his eerie young woman, Nettle, the old sibyl, and their bird..." How come does he decide to use this information despite Nettle still being alive?

My take on it is this:

Horn is completely dead at the end (Silk says, "in some sense, I killed their father"). This is why Silk is reluctant to intrude on Nettle saying goodbye to her sons.

However, Nettle was as much a disciple of Silk as Horn was. Horn says several times that if he hadn't gone to search for Silk, Nettle would have. With Horn dead and her sons grown and married, Nettle decides to go with Silk as a disciple, not as a wife. (Note in the conversation with Patera Remora, Silk pretty much acknowledges he hasn't had conjugal relations with Nettle.)

Similarly, with Horn dead, there's no reason for Silk to feel Nettle should come between him and Seawrack. Why Silk is interested in Seawrack is another question. I'm guessing he's somehow inherited Horn's attraction to her -- he's heard her song and is entranced.

And why is Seawrack interested in Silk? Maybe for the same reason everyone likes Silk. Or maybe it's because Scylla told Silk how to contact the Mother and the Mother gave Seawrack to Silk the way she originally gave her to Horn.

-Rostrum

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 07 Mar 2002, 16:25 · follows Michael Straight

A Fool Rushes In...

Can someone explain to me exactly what the situation with Nettle is come the end of RTTW?

Yeah. She goes off with the Narrator and the others to the Whorl.

I didn't follow this at all, despite re-reading several times. Silk-Horn says (of the information imparted to him by the Red Sun Whorl Scylla) "I would never have used it while Nettle was alive". How come does he decide to use this information despite Nettle still being alive? Because he finally realises that he is Silk, and is therefore not bound by the same bond to Nettle?

Ummmm... Actually, I suspect this is a reversal of what we've seen in several other places, the Narrator saying "Hyacinth" when Horn clearly(?) meant to say "Nettle." The confused Silkhorn personality seems prone to this kind of slip.

--Dan'l

And why would Nettle want to go off with him and Seawrack? If anyone can shed some light on this I'd be grateful.

Overall, I really enjoyed the books (not surprisingly since I love pretty much everything Wolfe has written), but I still think overall I preferred TBOTLS (I suspect I'm probably one of the few people who really love TBOTLS, though I hope I'm wrong). I don't think TBOTNS is directly comparable, since it is in a league of its own, somewhat. *Really* looking forward to "The Wizard Knight"...

Tom

--