

Number Five Is Not Gene, Maybe Not Wolfe

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 22 Mar 2002

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Jeff Wilson — 22 Mar 2002, 07:13

I have reread 5HC a couple of times lately, and some things Do Not Add Up.

When Mr. Million calls the roll in FHC, Number Five is always first, then David, as a formalism. This suggests that his name comes alphabetically before David's. This =might= mean that David's last name comes later than Wolfe.

When questioned about his name by Maitre, Number Five speaks the two words that he identifies with himself in an unqualified fashion. If these two words were also Maitre's name, he would not have such an unquestioning association. So, does Maitre go by a different name than Number Five's, or does Number Five not know what his father's full name is, even around the age of 12? If so, how does he expect to find one of his father's books by author's name?

David cannot be established as Maitre's son at the probate hearing, but Number Five's is not questioned, nor is Aunt Jeanine's relation to Maitre. Does David has a different last name from Maitre? If so, why does Number Five still think of him as his brother for so many years, =unless= there is some ambiguity of last names on the sister planets. The "original" settlers are identified as French, but the conquerors are only said to be English-speaking, IIRC. Perhaps they are some anglicized future version of a patronymic culture, like Iceland? That would explain Phaedria's coloring, at least.

Finally, I've never seen a picture of Gene Wolfe that suggested anything like the thin, pale, sharp faced people described in 5HC.

I think that perhaps, Number Five's name is Aubrey Wolfson, while David may be David Masterson.

Jeff Wilson

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