

Emigrating chems

The Urth list — 4 messages, 2 voices, 07 Oct 2002

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James Wynn — 07 Oct 2002, 19:14

Roy noted:

Marble ending up on Blue was a fluke; as Mucor's guardian she was just in the right place at the right time, and being the calde's friend didn't hurt. Cijfer was married to Wijzer, who was a bio, so I don't think she was a chem. Silkhorn traveled to several other cities and was even the ruler of one. There is no textual evidence to indicate that any chem other than Marble ever went to Blue or Green that I am aware of. Chems would have been impervious to inhumani attack and near invincible as a weapon against them, which is probably why Wolfe left them on the _Whorl_.

Crush interjects:

I was intrigued at the lack of interest any chems had in escaping the Whorl. I hypothesize that the reason is that as totally artificial people, they belong in a totally artificial world. Marble contained within her Betel and Rose, which is why she chose to leave the Whorl. By the same token, even though Chenille is also an "artificial" person (in the sense that she's been genetically engineered), she also contains divinely-created humanity.

The more I delve into this, the more I believe this story is underscored with a disdain for human cloning and the genetic engineering of embryos. On how Wolfe personally feels on these issues I am not qualified to speculate. But while I'm not Catholic, I do recall the Pope sermonizing against "making Man a product of his own technology."

-- Crush

Roy C. Lackey — 07 Oct 2002, 21:53 · follows James Wynn

Crush writes:

By the same token, even though Chenille is also an "artificial" person (in the sense that she's been genetically engineered), she also contains divinely-created humanity.

I meant to say something about that parenthetical bit above the last time you brought it up. Where is the evidence that Chenille is "genetically engineered"? The list of characters in EXODUS says of her: "Tussah's natural daughter."

-Roy

James Wynn — 08 Oct 2002, 14:28 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy asked:

I meant to say something about that parenthetical bit above the last time you brought it up. Where is the evidence that Chenille is "genetically engineered"? The list of characters in EXODUS says of her: "Tussah's natural daughter."

Crush responds:

Yes, so it does. Now the question is, who wrote the list of characters and places? Was it Wolfe? He's never added any such list to his books in the past. The answer is, "the list of characters and places was written by the author of the Book of the Long Sun": Horn and Nettle.

So the list of characters and places should not be viewed as decisive. What of textual evidence? I can't at this point name the page, but at one point Silk's remembers seeing a picture (or image?) of Calde Tussah and he's wearing makeup. We know men don't wear makeup in Viron because Quetzal had to justify his use of it due to a "skin condition". What reason would Tussah have for wearing makeup if he were not an inhume? If he's an inhume, then he can't have a natural human daughter.

Also, Chenille exhibits stunning visual acuity and manual dexterity when (while talking to Remora in LS2) she was able pull a knife from the wall, throw it from across the room and stick it exactly in the slot she from which she pulled it. I realize that she was possessed by Kypris at the time. But there is no reason to believe possession grants the possessee with any powers he would not have while unpossessed - any more than Mario Andretti could win the Indy 500 in an '85 Toyota Sentra. Anyway, proficiency with knives is a province of Kypris. That trick required physical powers normal humans could not perform after any amount of practice.

Remora himself knew this to be true. He told Gulo that she was the biologically engineered heir of Tussah ("son not my son" this is another hint of why Chenille's name is sexually ambivalent although I have not unraveled the puzzle yet). Remora was a "whorlly-wise" political operative; knowledgeable about, and usually involved with all occult (in the old sense) activity in Viron. His deductions should not be casually dispensed with.

Anyway, as a reader, I can step outside the narrative and realize that Remora (the eel, the underwater serpent) is thematically the underworld Ophidian Python of Apollo - the creature Apollo conquered to gain authority over prophecy. It is Remora who predicts to Silk in LS2 that the mantaeon

would be saved - as I recall, that the sale "would not come to pass" or if it did, "the old structures would be replaced with new ones." Both these predictions were proven true, since Blood and Musk were killed and the people of the mantaeon were moved to Blue. Remora is also the one who declared to the Chapter that Silk was the new Calde.

To sum up: (1) Tussah is an inhume, (2) Chenille has physical abilities beyond those of a normal human, (3) Remora, after a SINGLE conversation with Chenille, was convinced that she was genetically engineered AND was the Tussah's heir.

-- Crush

James Wynn — 08 Oct 2002, 14:38 · follows James Wynn

Crush wrote:

Yes, so it does. Now the question is, who wrote the list of characters and places? Was it Wolfe? He's never added any such list to his books in the past.

Crush responds to his response:

It just occurred to me that Wolfe *did* have such a list in the Soldier books. Yet for the reasons I gave in my post, I believe these lists of names and places were written by Horn and Nettle.