

Long Sun puzzles

The Urth list — 7 messages, 4 voices, 23 Oct 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3505>

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James Wynn — 23 Oct 2002, 16:48

Now that the discussion has worked its way back to the Long Sun, I would like to put out some puzzles I come across while carefully re-reading scenes involving Chenille (to test my theories against Roy's). I'm sure someone can resolve them for me:

Numero Uno:

At Orpine's murder scene, the following discussion transpires:

"[Blood demands, 'What's going on here?']

When Orchid did not answer, The raspberry-haired girl [Chenille] said wearily, "Orpine's dead. She just killed herself." She had a clean sheet under her arm, neatly folded. 'What for?' Blood demanded. No one replied. [Chenille] shook out her sheet and passed a corner up to Crane. Together, they spread the sheet over the dead woman. Silk put away his beads and went down the steps to the courtyard. Half to himself he muttered, 'She didn't-not forever. Not even as long as I.' Orchid turned to look at him. 'No, she didn't. Now shut up.'" LS1:10

My question is: She didn't what? Kill herself? Orchid never seems to doubt that she killed herself so why would she say "she didn't". Anyway, you can't kill yourself forever and Silk hasn't done that. What is Silk talking about and why doesn't Orchid want him saying it? This statement with its iambic meter smells like an extra-literary quote.

Numero Two-o

In the next chapter (11) Silk gets Chenille to admit that she killed Orpine and they talk about how and why she got the knife. Then Silk asks Chenille:

"'Is Doctor Crane the friend you mentioned?'

'No. That's somebody younger. Don't make me tell you who, unless you want me to get hurt."

I'm probably losing it but I've re-read this the murder scene over and over and I can't find anywhere Chenille mentions this male "friend". Could this be an editing mistake that was corrected in the paperback version?

Numero Three-o

The more I've thought about this the funnier it seems. In LS2:3 Silk and Marble have the following discussion:

"You said those chops smelled delicious. Do things-does food really smell good to you, Maytera? You can't eat it." "But I can cook it, and I do," she reminded him gently, "so naturally I know when something smells good." "I was only thinking of Maytera Rose, and that was wrong of me. I should have gotten something all three of you could enjoy."

My question is, WHAT could Silk have gotten at the grocer's or anywhere else that the all could have enjoyed? Vegetable oil? The very statement seems loony!

--Crush

cilluff1 at optonline.net — 23 Oct 2002, 17:37 · follows James Wynn

James Wynn (Crush) wrote:

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Later in LS, in the scene where Silk tells Orchid how he knew Orpine was her daughter this comment is made clear. Orpines, we learn in this scene, are also known as "live forever," so Silk's comment is a reference to the irony of Orpine's name -- Orpine, unlike what her name would suggest, did not "live forever." Orchid, as Orpine's mother, was aware of the "live forever" meaning to Orpine's name, and so she picked up on Silk's comment. At least, this is my understanding of it.

Regards,
Joe

Roy C. Lackey — 24 Oct 2002, 05:01 · follows cilluff1 at optonline.net

Crush asked:

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Joe gave the correct answer for the first question. I don't think there is an answer to the third. Even though Silk knows, intellectually, that Marble is a machine, he can't seem to take the fact to heart. That anthropomorphic streak in bios is just too wide and deep. <g>

For the second question: I have the paperback, and re-read from when Silk first met Chenille to the quote above. You're right; she made no mention of a male friend. It's a mistake. Wolfe may have become confused over who said what to whom. A few pages before that quote (277), Silk was asking her about her use of rust. He said that "Orchid and a friend who knows you have both told me you use it, and neither has reason to lie." That "friend" of Silk's is Auk, but Auk is also Chenille's friend. Auk is almost certainly the "somebody younger" she fears might hurt her. Hurt her again actually, as he had confessed to having done so before to Silk the evening before.

-Roy

James Wynn — 24 Oct 2002, 18:57 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy helpfully assists:

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Crush appreciatively responds:

I agree Joe is dead on for numero uno. I'm feeling kind of dense for the time I spent grappling with it. As for "numero two-o" that's a very clever explanation. But it's not clear to me what she would be hiding about Auk. He didn't give or sell her rust. Actually, he beat her because she tried to get money out him to buy rust. Anyway, Silk already knows about Auk's tenuous relationship with Chenille. Her relationship with him seems to have been quite casual since Auk doesn't really know her except as Kypris - when the goddess leaves, they have almost no real "friendship" at all. What could she tell Silk that would get her beaten?

Could it be Musk? Well she's already told Silk that Musk provided her with the Orpine's murder weapon. She reveals that she's a spy for Crane, but there's someone else she still afraid of.

Silk's question suggests this friend is someone whose relationship with Chenille he is so far unaware of. It's possible this question refers to a statement that actually existed at one time but was inadvertently cut. But it is gratifying to know that at least I'm not missing something right in front of my eyes (maybe).

-- Crush

Roy C. Lackey — 24 Oct 2002, 20:50 · follows James Wynn

Crush wrote:

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I found the definitive answer, and the friend is Auk. It's in chapter 5 of LAKE (111, paper), right after Auk met Silk and Chenille in the arbor at Sun Street:

"Auk was seated next to Chenille. Silk said, 'You know each other, clearly.'

"Chenille dimpled, and suddenly seemed no older than the nineteen years she claimed.

'Remember day before yesterday, Patera? When I said there was somebody? Somebody younger than Crane? And I said I thought he might help me . . . us? With Crane?'"

Could it be Musk? Well she's already told Silk that Musk provided her with the Orpine's murder weapon. She reveals that she's a spy for Crane, but there's someone else she still afraid of.

Musk didn't give her the dagger; Crane did. Crane just said he would ask Musk for advice about finding a good one. Chenille didn't know that Silk knew Auk when she mentioned that "friend" (the mention that didn't get into the text) when they spoke together at Orchid's. She knew Auk was a criminal, and was afraid Auk would be mad at her if she let a goody-two-shoes augur know about him.

-Roy

James Wynn — 24 Oct 2002, 21:46 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy triumphed:

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'Remember day before yesterday, Patera? When I said there was somebody? Somebody younger than Crane? And I said I thought he might help me . . . us? With Crane?'"

Crush responds:

That's it. Excellent work. On the other hand, this seems to make the narrative more problematic since not only does she **not** mention this "friend" at Orchids, she doesn't mention getting money out of Crane til after Orpine's funeral. And even then she doesn't offer her "friend" as a possible help in that.

Roy added:

Musk didn't give her the dagger; Crane did. Crane just said he would ask Musk for advice about finding a good one.

Crush

Well, Crane **does** give Chenille the dagger, but it was originally owned by Musk. Poppy was flat out lying when she said there was a guy named Cat who she and sometimes Orpine serviced. Note that the only person who can contradict this story is dead. This is why Musk becomes so agitated when Silk carefully studies the knife. Everyone is looking for the owner of the knife as if he is responsible:

"'May I see that, please?' Deftly, Silk took the dagger from Musk [and examines the blade]...'Nearly new,' he muttered. 'Not terribly expensive, but not cheap either.'" Musk said, 'Any fool can see that,' and took back the dagger."

For the rest of the exorcism Musk gives Silk the stink-eye.

The "cat" on the handle is a "civet" (or so I read it). "Civet" is a type of feline but it is also a musky yellowish fluid taken from glands in the anal pouch of the civet used as a perfume. So civet is a type of musk. Silk when studying the picture ponders the drop of blood and considers its possible association with Blood the person. So the picture is of a "civet with blood".

Furthermore, Silk considers the mouse in the cat's mouth. He decides it is a "badge" of some sort. Well whose badge is the mouse? Apollo's - denoting his patronage of medicine. Another connection between Silk and Apollo. Secondly, Musk owns Silk's mantaeon, so he has Silk in his

power just as the cat has the mouse in his mouth.

Finally, Musk plays "cat and mouse" with Silk, having Blood demand from Silk many many times more for the property than he paid, and then having him shorten the payment period to a week to get Silk to come back and beg for more. In case anybody misses this, after the exorcism Musk strikes Silk with his knife but "velvets his paw" by turning the blade inward with his knife - exactly what a cat does when playing with a mouse.

Roy explains Chenille's reason for not mentioning Auk thus:

Chenille didn't know that Silk knew Auk when she mentioned that "friend" (the mention that didn't get into the text) when they spoke together at Orchid's. She knew Auk was a criminal, and was afraid Auk would be mad at her if she let a goody-two-shoes augur know about him.

Crush relents:

Hmmm. Maybe. I can't imagine what Auk was supposed to have done for her.

-- Crush

Jason Ingram — 24 Oct 2002, 23:14 · follows James Wynn

Could it have been Hyacinth? (regarding question number two)

sepia

On Thursday, October 24, 2002, at 11:57 AM, James Wynn wrote:

Roy helpfully assists:

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