

Horn-Babbie/Ending of OBW

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 13 Mar 2003

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Tom Foster — 13 Mar 2003, 19:03

Just delurking briefly... I'm currently rereading the Short Sun books (halfway through IGJ at present) and found the conclusion of OBW just as confusing the second time round as the first. I've read a lot of the discussions that have gone on through the list over the months, and thought that a line from IGJ was interesting with respect to the Horn-into-Babbie / Babbie-into-Horn theories. The bit in question occurs when Incanto has been explaining to Torda about Fava and Mora's spying activities. Green starts to impinge on the room and Mucor appears in a stagnant pool:

"There you are, Silk. There you are, Horn. I've been looking everywhere for you. Babbie came back without you, and Grandmother's worried". (p147, IGJ)

This seems to make it fairly clear that both Silk and Horn are present in the body of the narrator at this point in the story - I would have thought that if Horn had 'gone into Babbie', or vice versa, then if anyone would know, Mucor would. It doesn't rule out some sort of temporary displacement of personalities (souls?) in order to throw off the inhumi or something though. It also seems odd that i) Babbie took so long to get back to Mucor, and ii) it took so long for Mucor to find Silk/Horn (though I guess this depends on exactly when Babbie returned to her).

Apologies if anyone's already raised this point; if so, I must have missed it. I'd love to hear any further thoughts on the OBW ending, or on what exactly had happened to Hyacinth and Silk immediately before Horn was sent into Silk's body (this is perhaps the most infuriatingly obscure part of the books for me - there don't seem to be any clues elsewhere and the theories about them having been attacked / Silk's self mutilation don't quite ring true). For what it's worth, I'm enjoying the books a lot more on second reading and am constantly reminded of just how great Wolfe is.

Tom