

Travelin' Jahlee

The Urth list — 29 messages, 4 voices, 10 Aug 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4488>

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Roy C. Lackey — 10 Aug 2005, 14:23

Jahlee came to Blue at least twice. The fact that she fed on infant Sinew and was mother to Krait is sufficient proof of that. She had to return to Green to spawn, then came back to Blue, was caught and buried under stones, then dug up by Silkhorn. That much is certain.

What is less clear is how she got to Blue the first time, when she bit Sinew.

Sinew was conceived on the _Whorl_, so he could have been no more than 2 or 3 years old when bitten; he was still small enough to be sleeping in a basket made by Nettle. In the scene where Silkhorn and Jahlee made that impromptu astral visit to Green, the visit where she got left behind in that room on the high cliff, she told him about learning to fly. She said that it had taken her "years" just to be able to fly up to the room (IGJ, 61), and even after reaching it that she still had to learn more before attempting the Crossing.

It's also clear from that scene that she already had a human spirit when she was very young; that is what motivated her to want to make the crossing. Presumably she was born with it. So, the question is: If Sinew was attacked by Jahlee during the first 2 or 3 years of colonization, before she was able to make the Crossing under her own power, how did she get to Blue?

I can think of only one solution -- she came on a lander. Either she boarded one of those landers that returned to the _Whorl_ automatically (like Abanja's), then went from the _Whorl_ to Blue on the same or another lander, or, she went directly from Green to Blue on a lander, like the slave ship from Pajarocu. Either way, what was Wolfe's point in having her go to Blue before she could fly properly?

Has anyone a better answer?

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 10 Aug 2005, 16:59 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Wed, 10 Aug 2005 14:23:24 -0700 "Roy C. Lackey"

<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

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and was mother to Krait is sufficient proof of that. She had to return to

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Wolfe may have nodded.

Otherwise, you have to get around that "years" comment (which I'd forgotten when I posted about this a few days ago). I guess it's just possible that "years" = "~2 years", which might give Jahlee just enough time, assuming that young inhumi reach maturity very quickly.

Do we know how long it takes a inhuma to grow to a point where she might be like young Jahlee, yearning to fly to Blue? Maybe it's not very long at all. (And of course there's the problem of what exactly a "year" is, in Green terms.)

Thalassocrat quoted and wrote:
Either way, what was Wolfe's point in having her go
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Wolfe may have nodded.

Maybe. But I have the feeling I'm missing something. Silkhorn even asked her, in so many words, if her first visit to that room had been made before her first trip to Blue. "She did not answer." (60) There has to be more to it!

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 11 Aug 2005, 00:49 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Wed, 10 Aug 2005 23:33:27 -0700 "Roy C. Lackey"

<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

Thalassocrat quoted and wrote:

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more to
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-Roy

Perhaps the mystery of the tall figure with the bird-like gait & the squat, dome-like building up the top have to be solved first.

I continue to hope that the figure is a Neighbor-naut and the "building" is his spacecraft, his close-fitting cloak (or whatever the description) is his spacesuit, and that this is the point from which Neighbors take inhumis to seed the Whorl. I posted a long time ago some flimsy reasons for thinking this might be the case; partly, the figure seemed to me the most plausible candidate Neighbor for telling Silkhorn about the Whorl-seeding.

As I mentioned, another possibility for the Jahlee timeline is that one of her parents was one of these Whorl-inhumis, returned by the Neighbors to Green (and presumably to this region of Green, which would explain what the young Jahlee was doing there). If this return happened before the first human exodus from the Whorl, it would give Jahlee plenty of time to grow & become a void-crosser.

One thing to note: I think it must be the case that the Neighbors took primitive inhumis to the Whorl, let them drink human blood, brought them back to Green, let them breed & then took some of the sentient offspring back to the Whorl. How else to explain Quetzal?

don doggett — 11 Aug 2005, 09:43 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

--- thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

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Well, Quetzal could have been on the Whorl since birth and come from Urth (if Jahlee can come back from being buried for years then anything's possible) or he could be the offspring of inhumis from Urth (or its system). It's no more convoluted than the above explanation, in fact less so.

Don

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 11 Aug 2005, 14:25 · follows don doggett

On Thu, 11 Aug 2005 09:43:54 -0700 don doggett

<kingwukong at yahoo.com> wrote:

--- thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

One thing to note: I think it must be the case that the Neighbors took primitve inhumis to the Whorl, let them drink human blood, brought them back to Green, let them breed & then took some of the sentient offspring back to the Whorl. How else to explain Quetzal?

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Don

Well, except that we know that the Neighbors did put inhumis on the Whorl (at least, Silkhorn said they did), while AFAIK there's no reason for thinking that there were any inhumis in Urth's system.

Roy C. Lackey — 11 Aug 2005, 14:39 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Thalassocrat wrote:

[snip]

As I mentioned, another possibility for the Jahlee timeline is that one of her parents was one of these Whorl-inhumis, returned by the Neighbors to Green (and presumably to this region of Green, which would explain what the young Jahlee was doing there). If this

return happened before the first human exodus from the Whorl, it would give Jahlee plenty of time to grow & become a void-crosser.

I don't know if the Neighbors were involved or not, but I have been inexcusably forgetful -- I had just read the passage the other day! Of course Jahlee traveled by lander -- she expressly said so during that astral trip to Sinew's village. "I was just a little girl when they put me on the lander." (IGJ, 369) She also again didn't answer the question about how long ago it had been, but it was a time when there were fewer humans on Green. It isn't certain from the surrounding text whether she was coming or going on the lander, or to or from where.

One thing to note: I think it must be the case that the Neighbors took primitive inhumis to the Whorl, let them drink human blood, brought them back to Green, let them breed & then took some of the sentient offspring back to the Whorl. How else to explain Quetzal?

I believe that when the _Whorl_ first reached the Short Sun system, landers were sent down to scout the planets. That could have been the point of contamination, whether it involved the Neighbors or not. I think that's what Silkhorn was hinting at in his talk with Abanja. (ibid., 370-371)

Earlier, you wrote:

Otherwise, you have to get around that "years" comment (which I'd forgotten when I posted about this a few days ago). I guess it's just possible that "years" = "~2 years", which might give Jahlee just enough time, assuming that young inhumis reach maturity very quickly.

Do we know how long it takes an inhumis to grow to a point where she might be like young Jahlee, yearning to fly to Blue? Maybe it's not very long at all. (And of course there's the problem of what exactly a "year" is, in Green terms.)

From scattered comments in SS, it seems that about 23 years elapsed on Blue between the exodus and, say, Jahlee's death. The same time frame for Green seems to have been about 25 years, according to Abanja (365). The planets seem to be too close together for the differences in their solar orbits to be very great. Certainly any difference in the amount of time between the exodus and Jahlee's attack on Sinew, say three years as measured by either planet's calendar, is too small to be significant for our purposes.

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 11 Aug 2005, 17:34 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Thu, 11 Aug 2005 14:38:36 -0700 "Roy C. Lackey"

<rlackey at stic.net> wrote:

I believe that when the _Whorl_ first reached the Short Sun system, landers

were sent down to scout the planets. That could have been the point of

contamination, whether it involved the Neighbors or not. I think that's what

Silkhorn was hinting at in his talk with Abanja. (ibid., 370-371)

Just to be clear, Silkhorn does say later that the Neighbors took inhumis to the Whorl, and using them studied humans for a long time (RTTW 235-6).

In the passage you quote, he says that landers must have been sent down from the Whorl before Auk's party left. But it seems clear to me that at this point he doesn't know about the

Neighbors' responsibility for the inhumani on the Whorl, and my guess is that he

here surmises (incorrectly) that landers are the only way inhumani could have reached it. (Jahlee establishes in this passage that the

Whorl is too distant for inhumani to reach unaided from Green.) Is there any other evidence in the text for such pre-exodus lander traffic, apart from this passage?

I've always assumed that Jahlee's lander comment in the IGJ passage

is just a lie, maintaining the fiction that she's human (Silkhorn has just revealed that she had been on Green before; if she's a human, she must have left by lander, and so on).

Roy C. Lackey — 11 Aug 2005, 23:29 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Thalassocrat quoted and wrote:

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Just to be clear, Silkhorn does say later that the Neighbors took inhumani to the Whorl, and using them studied humans for a long time (RTTW 235-6).

Yes, the Neighbors took inhumani to the _Whorl_. But I don't think they studied humans for a "long time". Just for the time (beginning thirty-something years before the exodus?) the _Whorl_ was in orbit around the Short Sun. Vadsig asked, "To greet us it was?" Silkhorn answered, "You might put it so, though they were sensible enough to find out a good deal about us -- and infect us with inhumani -- Before they ventured to greet even a few of us." He goes on to say of the Neighbor's, "the civilization they had built had failed them".

That's what I meant about the "point of contamination". I think that point was reached when the _Whorl_ first reached the Short Sun system and sent down exploratory landers. The Neighbors were effectively extinct on Green (as on Blue), therefore there were no sentient inhumani there then. The few Neighbors remaining on Green (as on Blue) were little more than ghostly caretakers. Their technology, like their cities, was in ruins. Maybe they had some magical (to humans) means of transporting themselves and other cargo from one place to another, but I don't recall any evidence of it. I'm suggesting that they made use of the earliest landers to move inhumani (and perhaps themselves) between Green and the _Whorl_. That's how Quetzal got there.

In the passage you quote, he says that landers must have been sent down from the Whorl before Auk's party left. But it seems clear to me that at this point he doesn't know about the Neighbors' responsibility for the inhumani on the Whorl, and my guess is that he

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Whorl is too distant for inhumani to reach unaided from Green.) Is there any other evidence in the text for such pre-exodus lander traffic, apart from this passage?

Offhand, I don't know.

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 12 Aug 2005, 05:31 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Thu, 11 Aug 2005 23:29:17 -0700 "Roy C. Lackey"

<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

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studied humans for a "long time". Just for the time (beginning thirty-something years before the exodus?) the _Whorl_ was in orbit around

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suggesting that they made use of the earliest landers to move inhumis (and

perhaps themselves) between Green and the _Whorl_. That's how Quetzal got

there.

Damn - I was sure some explicit mention was made somewhere of the Neighbors having spacecraft, but now I can't find anything. I do have the Neighbor testifying at Silkhorn's trial: "I was one of those who boarded your Whorl when it neared our sun." So Neighbors, and probably inhumis, went to the Whorl before it reached orbit.

Now obviously that doesn't necessarily mean that he had his own space-craft: scouting landers could have been sent out from the Whorl before it went into orbit - but is that very likely? Or the Neighbor could have astral-travelled there. But we don't know (do we?) of any other occasion when anybody gets to astral travel to a place they or a companion haven't visited previously. Perhaps the Neighbors can do it; I don't know.

But if they can't, when they went to their new home (the "Neighbor Whorl" or whatever it's

called), they must have gone physically - in space-craft.

At the end of IGJ, Silkhorn says to some Neighbors: "Will the inhumis really drive us away as they did you?" One replies: "Back to your ship, you mean?" Silkhorn says: "that isn't possible ... There are very few landers in working order ..." And the Neighbor responds: "Then they cannot drive you away as they did us."

Again, nothing definitive, but to me it suggests that the Neighbors did indeed leave in spacecraft. Obviously, they can return in astral form, but the going was physical.

Now as to the Neighbors transporting inhumis to the Whorl: all of the above aside, the Neighbors might have some magic matter transfer way of doing this, but there's nothing in the text to suggest it. Any astral type of travelling would not have delivered blood-drinking inhumis, unless it was totally different from any of the astral travelling in the text. So I get left with transportation via space-craft, probably Neighborly, not human landers, because it probably happened before the Whorl went into orbit, and it seems unlikely that any kind of human scouting of the system would have happened that early.

The final issue is whether any of these putative Neighbor space- craft might be present in the Short Sun system. I think the answer is probably yes. Silkhorn tells Vadsig in the relevant passage that the Neighbors took inhumis with them as "mirrors". But they can only function as mirrors (I believe) if they are allowed to breed. As far as we know, that can only happen on Green, and only when they are present on Green in their physical form.

So there must be some way of transporting them physically to Green, as part of a continuing process. Which leads me back to the bird- gaited figure and the squat dome on top of the cliff tower, the place where apparently the Neighbors had their last permanent presence, and a natural candidate for a place to drop off blooded inhumis and collect their offspring.

Roy C. Lackey — 12 Aug 2005, 23:46 · follows [thalassocrat](#) at [nym.hush.com](#)

Thalassocrat wrote:

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Okay, you're right about the point of first contact between Neighbors and humans having occurred shortly before the _Whorl_ reached orbit. And I do believe that that **was** the first ever contact between Neighbors and humans.

Now obviously that doesn't necessarily mean that he had his own space-craft: scouting landers could have been sent out from the Whorl before it went into orbit - but is that very likely? Or the Neighbor could have astral-traveled there. But we don't know (do we?) of any other occasion when anybody gets to astral travel to a place they or a companion haven't visited previously. Perhaps the Neighbors can do it; I don't know.

I'm not sure that what the Neighbors do is astral travel as Silkhorn knows it. If it is, where are their sleeping bodies? If wherever they live is a physical place (as opposed to some mystical "higher plane" of existence), such as another planet around another sun, then clearly they are able to travel by some sort of "magical", non-technological means to Blue and Green. The Neighbors had a lot more experience with astral travel than Silkhorn; perhaps they needn't have been to their destination previously. But that's pure speculation.

But if they can't, when they went to their new home (the "Neighbor Whorl" or whatever it's called), they must have gone physically - in space-craft.

Perhaps. But even if that's true, it was a long time ago. One of the Neighbors said that they had to deal with their inhum problem "a thousand years ago."

At the end of IGJ, Silkhorn says to some Neighbors: "Will the inhum really drive us away as they did you?" One replies: "Back to your ship, you mean?" Silkhorn says: "that isn't possible ... There are very few landers in working order ..." And the Neighbor responds: "Then they cannot drive you away as they did us."

Again, nothing definitive, but to me it suggests that the Neighbors did indeed leave in spacecraft. Obviously, they can return in astral form, but the going was physical.

And the other Neighbor in that conversation said, "You cannot go where we are." That throws a monkey wrench into the equation. If wherever the Neighbors lived had been reached by spacecraft, then it *could* be reached by spacecraft. What is there to prevent human spacecraft from going where Neighbor spacecraft have gone? Mankind had shown itself to be a master at space travel, second to none. Even the tired old _Whorl_ could be made to voyage again -- which is what it did.

How likely is it that an alien spacecraft could approach and dock with the _Whorl_ without Mainframe and the Crew knowing about it? Even if the Neighbors had FTL spaceships, how close would their hypothetical home planet have to be for them to first detect the presence of the _Whorl_ then travel to the Short Sun system, land on Green, pick up some wild inhum and then dock with the _Whorl_? Then they would have to take the inhum back to Green to spawn, all the while without being detected. I don't think it happened.

The implication I draw from the Neighbor's above statement is that the Neighbors *do* live in some non-physical realm where humans literally (in their current form) cannot go.

Now as to the Neighbors transporting inhum to the Whorl: all of the above aside, the Neighbors might have some magic matter transfer way of doing this, but there's nothing in the text to suggest it. Any astral type of travelling would not have delivered blood-drinking inhum, unless it was totally different from any of the astral travelling in the text. So I get left with transportation via space-craft, probably Neighborly, not human landers, because it probably happened before the Whorl went into orbit, and it seems unlikely that any kind of human scouting of the system would have happened that early.

I think that the Neighbor's initial exposure to humans was by their version of astral travel. Whenever the _Whorl_ first sent a lander to Green, the Neighbors used it to send back sentient inhum, grown from the humans on the lander.

The final issue is whether any of these putative Neighbor space-craft might be present in the Short Sun system. I think the answer is probably yes. Silkhorn tells Vadsig in the relevant passage that the Neighbors took inhum with them as "mirrors". But they can only function as mirrors (I believe) if they are allowed to breed. As far as we know, that can only happen on Green, and only when they are present on Green in their physical form.

Again, pure speculation, but the answer might be that wherever the Neighbors live is the equivalent of wherever the inhum are when, while astral traveling, they are their "true", inner selves; truly human in the case of, say, Jahlee, truly Neighborly in the cases of the Neighbors'

inhumi. True mirrors, in a sense.

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 13 Aug 2005, 09:01 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Fri, 12 Aug 2005 23:46:36 -0700 "Roy C. Lackey"

<rlackey at stic.net> wrote:

<Snipped for brevity.>

Horn thinks about how Quetzal might have come to the Whorl, in OBW (pp182-3): "As with so many other riddles, it is easy to speculate but impossible to know which speculation is correct - if any are." That seems to sum up the situation pretty well :)

Anyway, Horn gives three possibilities: the Whorl's orbit brings it into conjunction with Green from time to time, allowing inhumi to fly there; landers left the Whorl "much earlier" than Auk's, unknown to the Crew, and perhaps even to Pas; inhumi built their own lander and sailed it to the Whorl.

Mulling over the first possibility, he tries to work out what the period of Whorl/Green conjunctions might be. His baseline is his sure knowledge that Quetzal was prolocutor for 33 years.

Now, in COTLS, Quetzal tells Silk he has known about Pas' supposed death for "thirty years, since shortly after his death, in fact" (p130 in Epiphany). So presumably Quetzal was already prolocutor a couple of years before Pas' death.

Horn speculates that it would have taken Quetzal at least 15 years to work his way up the hierarchy & attain the prolocutorship. I don't know how good that estimate is, but assume it's roughly correct. Then if Quetzal did arrive on the Whorl on a lander, the Whorl must have been in orbit for more than 15 years before Pas' death.

During that time, he didn't trigger the "Plan" and order everybody out; why not? A sensible speculation might be that he was studying Blue & Green, sending down scouting parties etc etc, before making the decision - presumably if the planers didn't check out he could set the Whorl on course for another star. This would fit well with the Quetzal-on-lander speculation.

But then wouldn't the Crew be aware of the scouting? Why would Pas hide it from them? Silkhorn makes it clear in the Abanja passage in IGJ that he believes the Crew were not deliberately lying about Auk's lander being the first. And wouldn't Pas know then that Green wasn't a good destination, even if he didn't recognize the threat of the inhumi? But when the landers go, the passengers get not the slightest hint of what's down there - no maps, no nothing. If Pas had been spending time studying the planets, it certainly doesn't show.

When he comes back to life, he orders everybody out almost immediately. I don't think he was alive whe the Whorl entered orbit. I think if he had been, he would have started chucking people out right away. Most likely, his family killed him as the Whorl approached the Short Sun system, to stop him from doing this.

But if that's true, it puts Quetzal on the Whorl before it went into orbit, perhaps at around the same time as the Neighbors first "boarded" it, as it neared the Short Sun.

Just quickly on Neighborly astral travelling: it might be different from what Silkhorn does, but I don't know of any reason to suppose so. The Neighbors Silkhorn encounters seem generally to

be present in astral form - eg his first encounter, in OBW. Their sleeping bodies are presumably on "the Neighbor Whorl". The Neighbor who names it thus gazes towards the "Western stars" when he does so, which makes me think it is a "real" place, located amongst them.

And on stealth Neighbor spacecraft: the Quetzal-on-lander hypothesis seems to require the Crew to be similarly ignorant of the pre-Exodus lander traffic the hypothesis requires.

Roy C. Lackey — 13 Aug 2005, 23:43 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Thalassocrat wrote:

[snip]

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Now, in COTLS, Quetzal tells Silk he has known about Pas' supposed death for "thirty years, since shortly after his death, in fact" (p130 in Epiphany). So presumably Quetzal was already prolocutor a couple of years before Pas' death.

Is it just coincidence that Q's attainment of office more or less coincided with the death of Pas? I doubt it. I'm not implying cause and effect, just noting the correlation.

Horn speculates that it would have taken Quetzal at least 15 years to work his way up the hierarchy & attain the prolocutorship. I don't know how good that estimate is, but assume it's roughly correct. Then if Quetzal did arrive on the Whorl on a lander, the Whorl must have been in orbit for more than 15 years before Pas' death.

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But Silkhorn was also sure that landers **had** been sent out before Auk's. Who cut that big cable down at the Pole? When did it happen, and why? Was that the reason for Mainframe's and the Crew's ignorance of the comings and goings?

[snip of stuff I can't refute] <g>

Just quickly on Neighborly astral travelling: it might be different from what Silkhorn does, but I don't know of any reason to suppose so. The Neighbors Silkhorn encounters seem generally to be present in astral form - eg his first encounter, in OBW. Their sleeping bodies are presumably on "the Neighbor Whorl". The Neighbor who names it thus gazes towards the "Western stars" when he does so, which makes me think it is a "real" place, located amongst them.

Yes, but . . . the way it's phrased, "We found a way to leave and we left, seeking a new and a better home." "Found a way" doesn't sound to me like they just boarded their spaceships and went elsewhere. There would have been nothing novel about that if they had had a high-tech civilization, which they apparently once did, judging from the ruins on Green. I think there must be something more to it.

-Roy

James Wynn — 14 Aug 2005, 20:43 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I missed this start of this interesting thread, so I'll just stick my toe in as I see an opening.

When he comes back to life, he orders everybody out almost immediately. I don't think he was alive whe the Whorl entered orbit. I think if he had been, he would have started chucking people out right away. Most likely, his family killed him as the Whorl approached the Short Sun system, to stop him from doing this.

Pas didn't do it "immediately". Silk and Auk did. It seems it took awhile for before Pas went to extremes to drive people out. And then it was because the Whorl was clearly suffering from an overpopulation of Cargo (running out of water and such). Anyway if the prep work had already been done, it was necessary to re-do it after Pas' resurrection. It would be understandable that Pas' family waited for the last possible moment to rub him out rather than as soon as they entered orbit.

But then wouldn't the Crew be aware of the scouting? Why would Pas hide it from them? Silkhorn makes it clear in the Abanja passage in IGJ that he believes the Crew were not deliberately lying about Auk's lander being the first.

I'm becoming exasperatingly convinced that the answer is not discernable simply from the text. I suppose I'm coming around to Dan'll's position that Wolfe has created several unresolvable puzzles. But I think the answer is somewhere in that IMO when Silk sees "Pike's Ghost", it is the Rajan in soul-traveling through time. There are plenty of clues that the Rajan *has* time-traveled. In the LS (Lake I think) Silk saw a ghostly form of Oreb fly from his window at a time that Oreb was unable to fly. In IGJ, the grandmother tells a story from her childhood in which the Rajan and Oreb make an appearance. And that description of Pike's ghost vanishing sure looks more like *exactly* like soul travel to me. I realize this raises uncomfortable questions about why Silk thought it was Pike he saw.

And wouldn't Pas know then that Green wasn't a good destination, even if he didn't recognize the threat of the inhum? But when the landers go, the passengers get not the slightest hint of what's down there - no maps, no nothing. If Pas had been spending time studying the planets, it certainly doesn't show.

But Silkhorn was also sure that landers *had* been sent out before Auk's. Who cut that big cable down at the Pole? When did it happen, and why? Was that the reason for Mainframe's and the Crew's ignorance of the comings and goings?

[snip of stuff I can't refute] <g>

Just quickly on Neighborly astral travelling: it might be different from what Silkhorn does, but I don't know of any reason to suppose so. The Neighbors Silkhorn encounters seem generally to be present in astral form - eg his first encounter, in OBW. Their sleeping bodies are presumably on "the Neighbor Whorl". The Neighbor who

names it thus gazes towards the "Western stars" when he does so, which makes me think it is a "real" place, located amongst them.

Yes, but . . . the way it's phrased, "We found a way to leave and we left, seeking a new and a better home." "Found a way" doesn't sound to me like they just boarded their spaceships and went elsewhere. There would have been

nothing novel about that if they had had a high-tech civilization, which they apparently once did, judging from the ruins on Green. I think there must be something more to it.

Returning to the scene of the "bird-legged man" the Rajan IIRC the way the scene is written implies that the rock was always structure and the man was always a tree(?), he just didn't notice it before (like looking at those ink blots that are actually pictures of Jesus or George Washington). That suggests to me that the Neighbors are hiding in plain sight. Their "bodies" are the trees. All the associations between the inhumis and the lianas is because that is the form they took to feed on the Neighbors. The "war" they describe was a very slow moving one. How does such a civilization create altars, glass domes, and The Mother? I'm not certain. But then the Rajan could form whatever he wanted out of thin air so who knows? How did they "find a way to leave"? I don't know exactly but I think it has to do with the arrival of the Whorl. The Rajan cannot go anywhere that one of his fellow travelers has not been. Presumably, neither could the Neighbors. So when they had access to the colonists, they could get to the Whorl and even to Urth.

Is it just coincidence that Q's attainment of office more or less coincided with the death of Pas? I doubt it. I'm not implying cause and effect, just noting the correlation.

!!

I don't think it is coincidental at all, and I think it is suggestive of who Quetzal's mother fed on, but then I say the same about his Tussah's death and Pas' death. Oh, nevermind. It's like Silk said. No one will believe it. ;-)

J

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 14 Aug 2005, 22:36 · follows James Wynn

On Sat, 13 Aug 2005 23:42:55 -0700 "Roy C. Lackey"

<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

But Silkhorn was also sure that landers *had* been sent out before

Auk's.

Maybe: in this conversation with Abanja, Silkhorn is still thinking in the context of Horn's three hypotheses from OBW. He knows enough about the inhumis now to dismiss the hypothesis that they built a lander for themselves. Jahlee has just confirmed that the Whorl is too far from Green for inhumis to fly there. So by elimination he's left with the pre-Exodus lander hypothesis. It could be a conclusion he's come to *right now*. But this is before he discovers that the Neighbors were responsible; he's missing a hypothesis.

Seems consistent, anyway.

Who cut that big cable down at the Pole? When did it happen, and why? Was

that the reason for Mainframe's and the Crew's ignorance of the comings and goings?

Excellent question! Isn't it the cable running from Mainframe/bridge back to the drive? In other words, a very major trunk. Pure speculation: Pas did it as he was being killed by his family, to prevent them from making the Whorl leave the SS system (or divert from it, if he's killed before insertion).

Yes, but . . . the way it's phrased, "We found a way to leave and we left, seeking a new and a better home." "Found a way" doesn't sound to me like they just boarded their spaceships and went elsewhere. There would have been nothing novel about that if they had had a high-tech civilization, which they apparently once did, judging from the ruins on Green. I think there must be something more to it.

More speculation: it could just be that the Neighbors discovered (physical) FTL travel, something not available to the humans in the SS system.

Actually, there's at least one big hole in the Neighbor-naut theory: if Neighbors have spacecraft in the SS system, why don't Silkhorn & party just beg a lift to the Whorl with them, at the end of RTTW? I guess there might be just one, which is travelling between the Neighbor Whorl & Green on a long journey at this point - but it all starts to look a little too thin for comfort :)

On the other hand, it's a consideration which also tends to rule out any magic matter-transfer ability for the Neighbors.

OK, so next unanswerable question: where do Talus-brains come from? In the long Talus factory scene in LS, we get a discussion of different head designs etc etc but nothing about this, which would seem to be the most crucial part of making a Talus. A guess: they're swiped from the stores which chems have access to for making chem babies, or more disturbingly, extracted from chem fetuses.

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 14 Aug 2005, 23:25 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

On Sun, 14 Aug 2005 20:45:04 -0700 James Wynn <thewynns at earthlink.net> wrote:
I missed this start of this interesting thread, so I'll just stick my toe in as I see an opening.

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Pas didn't do it "immediately". Silk and Auk did. It seems it took awhile for before Pas went to extremes to drive people out. And then it was because the Whorl was clearly suffering from an overpopulation of Cargo

(running out of water and such). Anyway if the prep work had already been done, it was necessary to re-do it after Pas' resurrection. It would be understandable that Pas' family waited for the last possible moment to rub him out rather than as soon as they entered orbit.

It was surely Pas doing the shoving, from the start. Tartaros reveals to Auk that unless they get at least one lander away, Pas is going to start kicking butt.

I'm not sure that it makes more sense for Echidna et al to wait until "the last minute" before offing Pas. In other posts in this thread, I've given reasons why I think it makes sense to assume that it happened before. Taking that one step further, maybe the Whorl has just entered orbit as LS begins. It could explain why the renewed theomachy begins at just this point; Pas has bided his time waiting for the moment when his Plan can go into effect.

Maybe something like this: About 45-50 years out from the SS system, Pas commences some kind of early insertion manoeuvre (perhaps starting to decelerate). Until then, he hasn't given his family any specifics on the destination; now they realize the journey is coming to an end, and begin to plot. After 15 or so years, they are ready to pounce. They best Pas, but before he succumbs he cuts the main control cable, so they won't be able to divert the Whorl - whatever he has done before this is enough for a successful insertion. Thinking Pas truly dead, Echidna et al don't really mind the Whorl heading for orbit; they just want everybody to stay on it & continue to worship them.

Neighbors notice the approach of the Whorl at the beginning of its insertion manoeuvres. Somehow or other they board it & do their inhumani thing. (The rough coincidence in the timing of Pas' death and Quetzal's elevation is explained by the timing of the insertion manoeuvre, the various parties' responses to it, and the time for Pas' brood to perfect their plot & Quetzal to work his way up the hierarchy.)

In the not-very-plausible event that the Whorl's landers can travel between it and Green while it's traveling at relativistic speeds, perhaps the Neighbors enter the Whorl in astral form and induce humans to go in landers, returning human-charged inhumani to the Whorl. They use their Neighborish mojo to hide this activity from Pas and crew.

In the scenario in which they have their own FTL spacecraft, which can plausibly rendezvous & dock with the decelerating Whorl, they use this same mojo to hide their own comings & goings with primitive & sentient inhumani.

Roy C. Lackey — 15 Aug 2005, 23:28 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

I want to get back to my original point in this thread. I wrote:
So, the question is: If Sinew was attacked by Jahlee during the first 2 or 3 years of colonization, before she was able to make the Crossing under her own power, how did she get to Blue?<<

I still think the answer is that she traveled on a lander. But, on reflection, that 2-3 year window of opportunity has to be even smaller. If Jahlee was in fact imprinted with the spirit of Chenille, then one of her parents would first have to have fed on Chenille. Then Jahlee's mother would have to go through the breeding cycle on Green to produce a sentient Jahlee. That takes some amount of time. Then Jahlee had to mature enough to be able to fly up to that room on the cliff,

an amount of time she said was "years". And she still wasn't experienced enough to make the Crossing at that point.

Something's wrong. There isn't enough time. But it makes it pretty clear that she didn't get to Blue unaided.

The problem is compounded by her own breeding cycle. After feeding on Sinew she had to get back to Green to give birth to Krait. How did she get back? Did she learn to fly well enough to make the Return Crossing while on Blue? If so, did she learn before or after she attacked Sinew? How long after feeding on a particular human's blood is the potential for imprinting that person's spirit on any offspring viable? In other words, if Jahlee had fed on another human after she fed on Sinew, would Krait have been somebody else?

It matters because it affects how much time Jahlee could have spent on Blue before she had to get back to Green to become Krait's mother. I don't see her coming to Blue on a lander, then learning how to fly properly before attacking Sinew. I think she must have traveled both ways by lander.

The question then becomes, Did she board a lander to come to Blue, at a time when she knew she was incapable of flying between planets, for her own reasons? Or did someone(s) *put* her aboard a lander, presumably on Green, for reasons unknown?

I don't think Jahlee was just 'talking human' when she told Abanja, "I was just a little girl when they put me on the lander." And if the idea of a lander going from Green to Blue, as Jahlee implied, was a surprise to Abanja, she failed to show it.

I'm still missing something here.

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 16 Aug 2005, 00:59 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Mon, 15 Aug 2005 23:28:26 -0700 "Roy C. Lackey"

<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

I want to get back to my original point in this thread. I wrote:

So, the question is: If Sinew was attacked by Jahlee during the first 2 or

3 years of colonization, before she was able to make the Crossing under her

own power, how did she get to Blue?<<

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Jahlee was in fact imprinted with the spirit of Chenille, then one

of her

parents would first have to have fed on Chenille. Then Jahlee's mother would

have to go through the breeding cycle on Green to produce a sentient Jahlee.

That takes some amount of time. Then Jahlee had to mature enough to be able

to fly up to that room on the cliff, an amount of time she said was "years".

And she still wasn't experienced enough to make the Crossing at

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I'm still missing something here.

-Roy

An attempt at a timeline. Don't have the books with me so this is all from memory & so no doubt wrong in places:

1. Green/Blue conjunctions happen every 6 Blue years (see Horn's Quetzal speculations in OBW). I think this means that 7 Green years = 6 Blue years. Green is hotter, therefore probably closer to the sun, therefore has a shorter year. But the difference doesn't seem to be very great, and this ratio seems to fit with eg Abanja's "25 [Green] years".
2. As OBW begins the next conjunction is 2 [?] years off - see Horn family discussion about guns etc after Marrow et al depart.
3. So setting year 0 = Horn's arrival on Blue, OBW starts in Blue year 20. So conjunctions should happen in years 4, 10, 16 & 22.
4. Inhumis cross from Blue to Green at conjunction. Now I don't recall anything explicitly saying it was conjunction-time when Jahlee attacked Sinew, but assume so for testing: ie, Blue year 4.
5. It probably doesn't take more than a few days for inhumis to make the crossing. Disregarding her age for the moment, at a pinch Jahlee could have left Green, somehow or other stumbled across Horn's family & made the return to give birth to Sinew, all in Blue year 4.
6. Four Blue years is around 5 Green years. If inhumis spawn and mature very quickly (like frogs?), this may give just enough time for Jahlee's parent to take the blood of one of Auk's party on green, and for Jahlee to spend "years" getting strong enough to make the crossing. Is there anything in the story Fava tells at the beginning of IGJ which might give more of a clue about how long it takes inhumis to mature?
7. There's perhaps a little more time if Jahlee's parent/s was/were actually amongst Auk's party, ready to spawn upon landing. I don't think we ever get to hear very much about most of Auk's companions; I wonder if there's any hints of inhumanity in what we do hear?
8. But on the other hand, there's an added time constraint not discussed so far. Jahlee as a child has heard about crossing to Blue from others, who presumably must have made the return trip.

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 16 Aug 2005, 06:01 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

On Tue, 16 Aug 2005 00:59:42 -0700 I wrote:

4. Inhumis cross from Blue to Green at conjunction. Now I don't recall anything explicitly saying it was conjunction-time when Jahlee attacked Sinew, but assume so for testing: ie, Blue year 4.

Actually, it looks like that's where this doesn't work. When Krait is dying on Green, and tells Horn the Big Secret, Horn says he understands what had happened "almost twenty years ago" (IGJ p82). Those have to be Blue years, I think. This scene almost certainly takes place in about the 21st (or at most, 22nd) year since Horn landed. Blue year 2 looks like the latest for Jahlee's attack; "almost twenty" has to imply "more than 19", IMO.

As added support for an early date: Silkhorn's vision of the attack, near the beginning of RTTW, displays none of the stormy weather associated with conjunction; and other comments make it almost certain that they are coming up to just their second winter on Blue.

It looks like Jahlee is there on Lizard before conjunction, and in any case at much too young an age to have flown there.

6. Four Blue years is around 5 Green years. If inhumi spawn and mature very quickly (like frogs?), this may give just enough time for Jahlee's parent to take the blood of one of Auk's party on green, and for Jahlee to spend "years" getting strong enough to make the crossing. Is there anything in the story Fava tells at the beginning of IGJ which might give more of a clue about how long it takes inhumi to mature?

Reading Fava's story, I get the impression that inhumi do mature quickly, in the sense that an inhuma could mimic a "little girl" not long after birth.

James Wynn — 16 Aug 2005, 18:33 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I still think the answer is that she traveled on a lander. But, on reflection, that 2-3 year window of opportunity has to be even smaller. If Jahlee was in fact imprinted with the spirit of Chenille, then one of her parents would first have to have fed on Chenille. Then Jahlee's mother would have to go through the breeding cycle on Green to produce a sentient Jahlee. That takes some amount of time. Then Jahlee had to mature enough to be able to fly up to that room on the cliff, an amount of time she said was "years". And she still wasn't experienced enough to make the Crossing at that point. Something's wrong. There isn't enough time. But it makes it pretty clear that she didn't get to Blue unaided....I'm still missing something here.

That's the problem with the whole timeline for SS. Sinew's kids seem too old (*maybe* they could *just* fit in the timeline, but I don't think so). At the end of RTTW, Hoof says his dad has been gone 3 years, while Hide earlier said it was 2. And, although, I can't remember exactly where it is, I *do* recall something that made me think Sinew was born more than 9 months after the landing.

However, in this case, if one assumes that Inhumi require only a year to mature (like rats), then it is not impossible for Jahlee to board a lander and fly to Blue in plenty of time to feed on Sinew.

The problem is compounded by her own breeding cycle. After feeding on Sinew she had to get back to Green to give birth to Krait. How did she get back? Did she learn to fly well enough to make the Return Crossing while on Blue? ...I think she must have traveled both ways by lander.

I think you are right. Since it took years for her to learn to fly to the top of the cliff, then she could not have flown to Blue on her own the first time. Anyway, she wouldn't have needed the lander if she had (and I agree she boarded a lander posing as a little girl). Soooo she had to take a lander back to Green where she would then learn to fly for her journey back to Blue (with plenty of time, no?).

Taking a lander both ways cuts out any need for the wait for Green's close approach.

If so, did she learn before or after she attacked Sinew? How long after feeding on a particular human's blood is the potential for imprinting that person's spirit on any offspring viable? In other words, if Jahlee had fed on another human after she fed on Sinew, would Krait have been somebody else?

That's an excellent question and I don't know the answer. Do inhuma make the journey when they are pregnant? Are they impregnated on Blue or when they return to Green? Or before

leaving Green? The answer would vary depending on which is true.

And I can't remember the explanation if there was one of why male inhumis make the dangerous flight to Blue.

Or did someone(s) *put* her aboard a lander, presumably on Green, for reasons unknown?

Why *wouldn't* she board a lander to Blue if she wanted ensouled children but could not fly there herself?

J

Roy C. Lackey — 16 Aug 2005, 22:46 · follows James Wynn

Andrew, who does his homework <g>, wrote:

It looks like Jahlee is there on Lizard before conjunction, and in any case at much too young an age to have flown there.

[snip]

Reading Fava's story, I get the impression that inhumis do mature quickly, in the sense that an inhuma could mimic a "little girl" not long after birth.

Crush wrote:

However, in this case, if one assumes that Inhumis require only a year to mature (like rats), then it is not impossible for Jahlee to board a lander and fly to Blue in plenty of time to feed on Sinew.

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Taking a lander both ways cuts out any need for the wait for Green's close approach.

Well, well, we three seem to be in agreement that Jahlee didn't get to Blue unaided when she was very young. Do you also agree, Andrew, that she traveled by lander between Green and Blue?

Andrew also wrote:

8. But on the other hand, there's an added time constraint not discussed so far. Jahlee as a child has heard about crossing to Blue from others, who presumably must have made the return trip.

Now that's a problem. Not for Jahlee's personal timeline, but in general. Landers can't account for the Crossing stories she heard. Assuming Wolfe just didn't make a mistake, that would require a pool of sentient inhumis in place on Green *before* Auk's lander arrived, inhumis who had made the trip during a conjunction prior to the exodus. Who might those sentient inhumis have fed on? Worse, there would have to have been people on Blue for them to feed on, otherwise they would have been making a very dangerous trip for no reason.

I know of no textual evidence or justification for believing there were any humans on Blue before Horn's lander put down. Something stinks.

-Roy

James Wynn — 17 Aug 2005, 04:49 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Now that's a problem. Not for Jahlee's personal timeline, but in general. Landers can't account for the Crossing stories she heard. Assuming Wolfe just didn't make a mistake, that would require a pool of sentient inhumani in place on Green *before* Auk's lander arrived, inhumani who had made the trip during a conjunction prior to the exodus. Who might those sentient inhumani have fed on? Worse, there would have to have been people on Blue for them to feed on, otherwise they would have been making a very dangerous trip for no reason. I know of no textual evidence or justification for believing there were any humans on Blue before Horn's lander put down. Something stinks.

Since Quetzal was on the lander, we know there were likely sentient inhumani on Green. Wolfe has *said* Quetzal was not the only inhumani on the Whorl. His existence shows that the inhumani had on the Whorl for at least forty years and would be well ensconced among the Cargo. In fact, they probably brought a few with them both to Blue and to Green (perhaps even on Auk's lander). Sooo...it is reasonable to presume that the sentient inhumani on Green would have heard about landers arriving at Blue.

I think I'm missing an important facet of your question.

Why the heck did the Neighbors use inhumani to "study" humans anyway? They would permit them to study human souls. But for what purpose? What useful knowledge did they gain from such experiments?

J

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 17 Aug 2005, 07:24 · follows James Wynn

Roy asks:

Do you also agree, Andrew, that she traveled by lander between Green and Blue?

Maybe! A difficulty is that in Silkhorn's vision of her attacking infant Sinew, she seems more like a starving adult than a "little girl". RTTW p27: "The inhumani came, a bent and haggard figure that was not a woman ... She recalled Jahlee ... a ragged, painfully thin figure with famished eyes ..." It's possible I guess that Jahlee at the age of less than two (?) could look like that, but

The description makes it seem like she's been hungry for a *long* time, and really it reminds me of the adult Jahlee, just after she's been disinterred in Gaon.

Anyway, I need to mull over this some more.

Part of the problem is that Jahlee has every reason to hide or lie about things which happened around the time of her attack on Sinew. she surely doesn't want Silkhorn to guess the truth (he has, by the start of RTTW, but she doesn't know it).

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 17 Aug 2005, 20:06 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

I wrote

Anyway, I need to mull over this some more.

Mulling outcomes:

Some of the Jahlee problems go away if you can push her birth back to pre-Exodus times. That's easy enough, by itself. I continue to believe that the Neighbors must have been using Green as the spawning ground for the inhumis they placed on the Whorl. If Jahlee is a result of this program, she could have been born many years pre-Exodus, spent years learning to fly, crossed to Blue at a pre-Exodus conjunction, eventually stumbled on Horn's family, and flown back to Green, perhaps invigorated by Sinew's blood.

Objections:

Why would she make a pre-Exodus Crossing, without the prospect of human prey? A straightforward reading of her comments in the cliff tower scene is that inhumis aspire to fly to Blue so that they can hunt humans, and give birth to sentient children when they return.

But it is possible the aspiration to make the Crossing isn't simply a matter of wanting to go where there is less competition for human blood. "That little scratch of fire, and you're gone forever. I wanted to try just the same. We all do ... It's something we get from you, a need to become more & more like you, until we're as human as we can possibly be."

Why would going to Blue to prey on humans meet a need to become more human-like? Why not prey on humans on Green, if preying on humans is the point?

Are inhumis really ready to give birth at the age of two or three? Of course it's possible - we know very very little about them. But still ... in the cliff tower scene, Jahlee makes it sound to me as if she has a lot of growing up to do before she will be ready. And if she is ready, and there are humans on Green at this point, then why not with blood from one of them? Perhaps there aren't very many humans, and competition is fierce - but is it really *so* difficult to get access to a human on Green that the hugely risky alternative of a Crossing becomes attractive?

I think that the Crossing may be more of a rite of passage; something a sentient inhumis might aspire to even without the lure of human blood as a reward. And when she says she was thinking about flying up to the top of the tower before she had decided to hunt Blue, we have to remember that of course inhumis do not prey only on humans. If competition is such a big problem, would it not also apply to other kinds of prey - so that Blue becomes an attractive hunting ground, with or without humans?

The final difficulty with this piece & my theory is bound up in her comment that she had day-dreams of returning to the tower room after making the Return Crossing, to spend time there thinking about herself and "what she had done for her children". Why should a Crossing & return do anything in particular for her children, if there is no human blood involved?

Dunno! I can speculate that it may have something to do with how Neighbors select sentient inhumis for placing on the Whorl - the "most human" and the strongest, who have made the Crossing & Return. In the absence of humans elsewhere, being selected would be the only way of ensuring sentient children. But Jahlee disclaims any knowledge about how Quetzal got to the Whorl. She could be lying, for reasons which can be invented upon request :)

Jahlee's comments about being just a little girl when she was "put on the lander" on Green: I don't mind sticking with my original reading, that she's just pretending here.

Roy C. Lackey — 17 Aug 2005, 22:12 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

I wrote:

Now that's a problem. Not for Jahlee's personal timeline, but in general.

Landers can't account for the Crossing stories she heard. Assuming Wolfe just didn't make a mistake, that would require a pool of sentient inhumis in

place on Green **before** Auk's lander arrived, inhumis who had made the trip during a conjunction prior to the exodus.

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have fed on? Worse, there would have to have been people on Blue for them to

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reason.

Crush wrote:

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a few with them both to Blue and to Green (perhaps even on Auk's lander).

Sooo...it is reasonable to presume that the sentient inhumis on Green would have heard about landers arriving at Blue.

I think I'm missing an important facet of your question.

No, I think I jumped to an unwarranted conclusion. Horn's lander(s) left the

Whorl just days after Auk's. If Andrew is anywhere near right about a conjunction in or about

Blue year 2, then I suppose it's possible that sentient inhumis (fed on Auk's party) could have

made the trip to and from Blue with sufficient time left over for a young Jahlee to have heard

them talking about it. It just makes that window of opportunity for Jahlee to feed on Sinew smaller and smaller.

Why the heck did the Neighbors use inhumis to "study" humans anyway? They

would permit them to study human souls. But for what purpose? What useful

knowledge did they gain from such experiments?

Well, if nothing else, it gave them One-Hour-Photo snapshot versions of what humans were

really like. But that doesn't really answer the question. At least I hope it doesn't. The Neighbors

may have had a proprietary interest in strangers coming to their Blue-Green system, but who

put them on a moral high-horse?

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 17 Aug 2005, 22:13 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Andrew quoted and wrote:

Do you also agree, Andrew, that

she

traveled by lander between Green and Blue?

Maybe! A difficulty is that in Silkhorn's vision of her attacking

infant Sinew, she seems more like a starving adult than a "little

girl". RTTW p27: "The inhumis came, a bent and haggard figure that

was not a woman ... She recalled Jahlee ... a ragged, painfully

thin figure with famished eyes ..." It's possible I guess that

Jahlee at the age of less than two (?) could look like that, but

....

The description makes it seem like she's been hungry for a *long* time, and really it reminds me of the adult Jahlee, just after she's been disinterred in Gaon.

But it's just a dream and can't be taken at face value. Silkhorn also saw Sinew wearing a ring in that dream that I don't think had really been there. Silkhorn's subconscious is at work in the dream, putting together the clues about Jahlee, Sinew and Krait. At the time Sinew was attacked, Silk was back in Viron and Horn was out on the beach with Nettle. Neither component of Silkhorn had any real knowledge of the details of the attack. It's all imagination.

Or are you suggesting something more . . . supernatural?

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 17 Aug 2005, 23:36 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Andrew wrote:

Some of the Jahlee problems go away if you can push her birth back to pre-Exodus times. That's easy enough, by itself. I continue to believe that the Neighbors must have been using Green as the spawning ground for the inhumis they placed on the Whorl. If Jahlee is a result of this program, she could have been born many years pre-Exodus, spent years learning to fly, crossed to Blue at a pre-Exodus conjunction, eventually stumbled on Horn's family, and flown back to Green, perhaps invigorated by Sinew's blood.

Objections:

An objection I have is her presumed imprinting with Chenille's spirit. I don't think her mother(?) fed on Chenille on the _Whorl_.

Why would she make a pre-Exodus Crossing, without the prospect of human prey? A straightforward reading of her comments in the cliff tower scene is that inhumis aspire to fly to Blue so that they can hunt humans, and give birth to sentient children when they return.

But it is possible the aspiration to make the Crossing isn't simply a matter of wanting to go where there is less competition for human blood. "That little scratch of fire, and you're gone forever. I wanted to try just the same. We all do ... It's something we get from you, a need to become more & more like you, until we're as human as we can possibly be."

Why would going to Blue to prey on humans meet a need to become more human-like?

[snip]

Jahlee expressed similar sentiments on her death bed, a time when she had nothing to gain or lose by lying.

I keep thinking of Tennyson's "Ulysses". I won't presume to quote it, but I can see (or think I do) so much resonance with _Short Sun_. Recall it, or read it again is all I can ask. I first thought about it when you reminded me about the Neighbor looking toward "the western stars" when speaking of his new home. Maybe I'm just getting to be an old fool, but that's my answer. The

poem also puts me in mind of Silk's return to the _Whorl_ at the end of RTTW.

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 18 Aug 2005, 05:07 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy objts:

An objection I have is her presumed imprinting with Chenille's spirit. I don't think her mother(?) fed on Chenille on the _Whorl_.

I'm not wedded to Chenille as Jahlee's soul parent. In fact, J seems much more umm regal (in her demon-whore kind of way) than Chenille. She also doesn't seem to have any recognition of Chenille. But who knows ...

Roy also said:

Jahlee expressed similar sentiments on her death bed, a time when she had nothing to gain or lose by lying.

Sorry - don't understand this one???

I keep thinking of Tennyson's "Ulysses". I won't presume to quote it, but I can see (or think I do) so much resonance with _Short Sun_. Recall it, or read it again is all I can ask. I first thought about it when you reminded me about the Neighbor looking toward "the western stars" when speaking of his new home. Maybe I'm just getting to be an old fool, but that's my answer. The poem also puts me in mind of Silk's return to the _Whorl_ at the end of RTTW.

I can see what you mean with this, but the ending of RTTW is to me more triumphant & less elegaic than Ulysses. I take away an image of Silkhorn sailing thru the galaxy spreading justice & good stuff, not going to meet some heroic end.

Also: Silkhorn just isn't that old, surely. Mid/late forties? But he's described as if he's some raddled ancient. I don't really understand this. I mean, presumably he's never even had to sit thru an all day strategy "brain-storming" session or go entertain potential clients who don't speak English or do any of the stuff which makes me feel raddled & ancient :)

The Neighbors, though, are definitely elegaic, and I don't hate the idea of them dwelling in some Neighborish Elysium beyond the world. It's just not my preferred view of what's going on.

Roy C. Lackey — 18 Aug 2005, 20:58 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Andrew quoted and wrote:

Jahlee expressed similar sentiments on her death bed, a time when she had nothing to gain or lose by lying.

Sorry - don't understand this one???

Oh, I was referring to your speculations about "Why would going to Blue to prey on humans meet a need to become more human-like?" And Jahlee's "day-dreams of returning to the tower room after making the Return Crossing, to spend time there thinking about herself and 'what she had done for her children.'"

When dying she said, "You think we don't care" [. . .] "You do, so we must."

Silkhorn thought she was speaking about her children, and went on to explain to Nettle, "To pass among us, they imitate us -- even our emotions. Most of their spawn are eaten by fish while they are still very young." Jahlee then gave her version of the Secret, and almost the last thing she said was, "Krait was my son, the only one who lived with the mind it took from yours."

Presumably she was expressing, and feeling, the inherited human emotion of grief for her lost children, particularly the loss of her only son. Nettle's firstborn was also effectively lost to her, to say nothing of her husband. Jahlee had attacked Nettle not because of a need to feed, but because of the human emotion of female jealousy. At the same time, she felt empathy with Nettle, which is why she did what she could as she died to balance the score by revealing to Nettle the Secret, something she knew Silkhorn wouldn't do.

It was the last entry Silkhorn himself made in his book, which should give his opinion here more weight than elsewhere.

-Roy