

Able's love

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 11 Nov 2005

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Roy C. Lackey — 11 Nov 2005, 06:37

When Old One Eye appeared to Idnn, he promised her a place at his table in Skai in exchange for her service to him. (W, 235) I should probably leave aside the fact that she had done nothing to deserve such an honor that I can see, unless it was to precipitate the stabbing that would lead to the death of Gilling. Such are the whims of gods. In any event, he told her, "I let him [Able] return that he might regain his only love. Help him, Queen Idnn."

A few pages later, Mani gave his little lecture on Lost Love. (238-39)

At the end of the book, Odin asks Able if he is ready to return to Skai. Able is speechless, so Etela speaks for him, "He's afraid she [Disiri] won't come with him." Odin responds, "She would not, child." [. . .] "She cannot." He then goes on to demonstrate that Disiri is nothing but animated debris, and tells Able to pick one or the other, Skai or her. Able makes his choice, giving Disiri enough of his blood to render her, apparently, completely human. Odin disappears, and with him goes Able's chance of ever returning to Skai.

This brings me to my point. Odin's choice of words implies that Disiri "would not" have *chosen* to go with Able to Skai, even had such a thing been possible. I'm not sure why she would not have wanted to go to Skai, unless it was because, in the style of Lucifer, she would rather rule as a queen in a nether world than exist as just another pretty face in an upper world, probably sitting below the salt. Be that as it may, it's Odin's other pronouncement that puzzles me more.

"She cannot" suggests that there is some sort of immutable, categorical prohibition against Disiri and/or her kind that would keep her out of Skai.

Cannot, rather than *may not*. There is a running gag in the story involving people correcting one another's usage of may and can, and I think that Able's name is sometimes used in an ambiguous way. Anyway, if it is true that Disiri *cannot* go with Able to Skai, I don't see that it matters that she *may not* have wanted to go, and if Odin spoke the truth to Idnn, what was his point in letting Able return to Mythgarthr?

It is true that Able was somewhat melancholy among the diversions of Skai; presumably he moped for want of Disiri, but, even so, how was letting him go back to her a remedy, from Odin's point of view? Did he expect Able to get over her, to get her out of his system, so to speak? Was Able's career in the second book incidental to what amounted to a vacation for a god, slumming in the pleasures of the lower worlds?

Or have I misunderstood Odin entirely? Is it possible that "regain his only love" referred to something other than Disiri? What did Idnn ever do that furthered Able's pursuit of his fairy lover? Then there is Mani's speech and Able's actual experience with the Room of Lost Love. And, at the end, even though Able turned his back on Skai, it seems he will be given a position in a still higher realm than Skai; his last words to Odin being "I am not Able." And he both can and may take his woman with him.

Somehow, it just doesn't seem fair.

-Roy

aramini1 at cox.net — 11 Nov 2005, 23:02 · follows Roy C. Lackey

An interesting post, Roy. I think somewhere in the text they go over how difficult it is for someone to maintain their form in a higher realm: Disiri is somewhat invisible in the light of Mythgarthr - she would be even less substantial in the world of Skai and subject to dissolution - and in order for her to go there, I think she would have to accept Able and incorporate his being into her more than she wants to. She would have to worship him - and I'm still not sure if she wants to revert to the "natural" order.

Very interesting to note that Arthur's last words to Odin are "I am not Able". Why do you think Lothur had such pleasure in making Able break his vow to the Valfather, if it actually only seemed to do good in the long run? Did the Valfather WANT Able to break his word?

In any case, I think you have a fairly good grasp on why Disiri didn't want to go: it is better to rule and be worshipped, according to her, than to capitulate to a lover that you feel you created and being forced to sacrifice your entire independence to even exist in the realm of Skai. By the end, does it seem that Disiri or Able is in the driving seat, or are they equal, sometimes as children, sometimes as adults?

Marc Aramini

From: "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net>

Date: 2005/11/11 Fri AM 01:37:40 EST

To: "urth" <urth at urth.net>

Subject: (urth) Able's love

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