

single parent families

The Urth list — 7 messages, 6 voices, 07 Jun 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4643>

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b sharp — 07 Jun 2006, 10:24

As a BotNS fanatic I have noticed a complete absence (I think, any exceptions?) of "normal" two parent families in the series. All the child characters have either one or zero parents to interact with. The closest we see to an intact nuclear family is Casdoe's, but of course her chapter is titled "the Widow". From my lesser familiarity with his other works, I think this trend might extend to the greater Wolfe universe but I'm not sure. Anyone else have thoughts on this?

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 07 Jun 2006, 18:28 · in reply to b sharp

On 6/7/06, b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com> wrote:

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H'mmm.

It's certainly true of 5HC -- #5 has only Maitre, the shadow-child doesn't have much of a paternal presence (vague memory, y'know), and VRT's mum vanished years ago.

It's true of Patera Silk, who had no "present" father.

It's true of PEACE; Weer's parents are both alive during his childhood but noticeably "absent."

Arthur Ormsby's family situation prior to falling into the Seven Worlds in TWK is ambiguous at best; it seems that he's being raised by his older brother Ben.

The biggest exception seems to be Horn's happy household on Blue: both parents are there to raise the kids, at least until he wanders off to find Silk.

--Dan'l

I do not fear Satan half so much as I fear those who fear him.

-- St Teresa of Avila

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

Tristan Davenport — 07 Jun 2006, 18:49 · in reply to b sharp

b sharp wrote:

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I haven't read everything of Wolfe's by any stretch of the imagination, either, but you seem to be onto a pattern. Parent-child estrangement happens for just about every reason possible in the Book of the Long Sun. The only nuclear family we really see -- the gods don't count because Typhon is dead/in storage for most of the book -- is Horn and Nettle. But they don't have children until the very last chapter.

In There are Doors a nuclear familie is impossible: men die shortly after having sex.

In the few Wolfe short stories I've read that involve children, absent fathers (and often mothers) seem to be the rule. The Island of Doctor Death (single mom with a revolving door policy on boyfriends), The Death of Doctor Island (children are institutionalized), The Eyeflash Miracles (boy travels alone, but meets a stand-in father figure).

It seems that the father stand-in is an equally common pattern: Patera Pike for Silk, Severian for Little Severian, Latro for Io (though he later has a romance with her, if I remember right??), perhaps Dr. Death for the boy in that story...

I don't have any analysis of this, but the trend is definitely present in what I've read of Wolfe.

~Tristan

DhSunanda at aol.com — 08 Jun 2006, 16:11 · follows Tristan Davenport

Re: (urth) single parent families

La Befana (short story) has an "ideal" two parent + two kids + incoming grandmother family. With only a six-legged alien as a neighbour.

The War beneath the Tree is a slow-burning horror story in a perfect 2p+1c family.

"Pandora" by Holly Hollander is a novel about a 2p+1c family too.

Those three from memory.

But memory can be suspect.

Sunanda

Chris — 08 Jun 2006, 20:49 · in reply to DhSunanda at aol.com

Well, only children are another of Wolfe's themes that he's mentioned in essays - I can't refer to the originals, but they are quoted in Wright's book, "Attending Daedelus" - given that he was an only child.

If we're going to do a survey of this, though, I think we should focus mainly on the novels. I

don't think anyone's mentioned the odd family situation of Art Ormsby yet.

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Sunanda

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 08 Jun 2006, 21:22 · in reply to Chris

On 6/8/06, Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

I don't think anyone's mentioned the odd family situation of Art Ormsby yet.

Ahem.

On 6/7/06, Dan'l <danl do at gmail.com> wrote:

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--Dan'l

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Jeff Wilson — 09 Jun 2006, 06:40 · in reply to DhSunanda at aol.com

DhSunanda at aol.com wrote:

Re: (urth) single parent families

La Befana (short story) has an "ideal" two parent + two kids + incoming grandmother family. With only a six-legged alien as a neighbour.

Not quite; they mention an expectant couple next door.

"Paul's Treehouse" has Paul living in the tree behind his parents' house.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >