

Gene/Jeannine/#5

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 02 Apr 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/465>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Robert Borski — 02 Apr 1998, 03:42

Tony Ellis wrote about Fifth Head's narrator:

"Very astute of you to have spotted this. (Either that, or very stupid of me to have missed it.) I suppose if Wolfe is a typical American-Irish name then it's reinforced slightly by the photograph of his mother Number Five sees, where he declares her to be of Celtic origin."

"All the same, I think I would say "can be theorised to be" rather than "can be determined to be"... We can't be sure his name isn't Witherspoon. :-) And where are you getting Gene from? The Gene-geneticist pun is the sort of thing Wolfe loves, of course..."

Tony, et al:

On pg. 22 of the Scribner's edition of FIFTH HEAD, Number Five's aunt tells him, "Call me Aunt Jeannine." And since later we learn that Aunt Jeannine is a female variant of Number Five's father (and since Number Five himself is cloned from the same source), inferentially we may assume Number Five's name to be the male equivalent of Jeannine or Jean/Gene.

As for the "Wolfe" moiety, besides the library reference, Number Five remarks that his house is sometimes referred to as Maison du Chien and that this "may have been a reference to our surname as well." [ibid. pg 14]. Chien meaning dog in French, it's not that big of a stretch to assume Wolf/e (dogs being evolutionarily the domesticated versions of wolves) is the name in question.

Robert Borski

Michael Straight — 02 Apr 1998, 13:43 · follows Robert Borski

On Thu, 2 Apr 1998, Robert Borski wrote:

On pg. 22 of the Scribner's edition of FIFTH HEAD, Number Five's aunt tells him, "Call me Aunt Jeannine." And since later we learn that Aunt Jeannine is a female variant of Number Five's father (and since Number Five himself is cloned from the same source), inferentially we may assume Number Five's name to be the male equivalent of Jeannine or Jean/Gene.

Jeannine = "Gene #9"?

-Rostrum

Charles Dye — 03 Apr 1998, 10:53 · follows Michael Straight

"Robert Borski" <rborski at corecds.com> elucidates:

As for the "Wolfe" moiety, besides the library reference, Number Five remarks that his house is sometimes referred to as Maison du Chien and that

this "may have been a reference to our surname as well." [ibid. pg 14].
Chien meaning dog in French, it's not that big of a stretch to assume
Wolf/e (dogs being evolutionarily the domesticated versions of wolves) is
the name in question.

Ah, and I thought "Maison du Chien" was just more polyglot punnery like "Cave Canem"
("Beware of Dog," referring to the statue, but reinterpreted as "Dog Cave.") 666 Saltimbanque
is of course a cat house, among other things

raster at highfiber.com

Jim Jordan — 03 Apr 1998, 22:28 · follows Charles Dye

A coupla notes:

1. The brother of No. 5 in "5th Head" is indeed a "control," a child of man and woman. The differences between him and No. 5 are important since, as the father says, "we don't make progress." The Cerberus line is stuck; though "someday they'll want us," which I've always taken as an allusion to a future antichrist, especially given that their home is a WhoreofBabylon House.
2. Note how this them is carried through in the third story, as the humans try to wipe out the shapeshifters, thus eliminating diversity and the kind of marriage-to-the-other that could make for a dynamic future. VRT is, of course, a shapeshifter.
3. On Thecla and the alzabo: It seems to me rather clear that since everything that comes in contact with Severian is brought back to life, Thecla comes back to life and live within him. Some of Severian's memories seem more likely to be Thecla's. I think of his comment after visiting the whorehouse that he never went there again because it was painful. Men don't experience pain in their initiation into sex, but women do, of course. I'll bet that was Thecla's memory.

Then again, maybe I'm wrong.

Nutria (if that's still who I am)
(Well, I'll always be the Rat to Alga!)