

TWK Able's ambulance

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 31 Dec 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4782>

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Ramon Cahenzli — 31 Dec 2006, 16:01

Hello

I've only discovered this list today, and I have to confess not having read any Wolfe except for TWK so far. But I did buy all novels in the BotNS line, so I'll promise to catch up.

TWK left me with a warm fuzzy feeling in my stomach and with a lot of questions, most of which I don't really need to find an answer for, others that I already found explanations for in the list archives. Sometimes it's nice to leave some things in the mist, though, I think it can add to the magic of a book.

But there is one question that is gnawing on my sanity right now. What's with the ambulance in The Wizard? This scene came around the climax of the story, when I least expected to be confronted with references to Able's American identity:

"Beyond the black pavilion was a highway. Cars, trucks, SUVs, and minvans -- all sorts of vehicles -- were traveling on it, going so fast that it seemed certain they would crash. There was a school bus, a red hook-and-ladder, a black-and-white police car, and a white ambulance. Those stand out even now. The ambulance rocked from side to side as it tore along with its light bar blazing and its siren screaming. I climbed down and went to the highway. The drivers would not stop for me, and I shouted at their cars, thinking how far the ambulance was getting ahead of me. Able -- the real Able -- was in that ambulance. I knew that, and I wanted to help him." (W, 459)

James Wynn (I think, please correct me) said earlier on the list:

The ambulance? That's Arthur Ormsby being taken to the hospital of course! They found him in a coma possibly near death from hypothermia in that valley where the Moss Aelf took him. Presumably, when he reaches the Most High God, he will awake.

I quite like this interpretation. Another list member (I lost the actual posting) spoke about how America-Art's identity might have switched into Mythgarthr-Able's body and the other way round. So at the time the ambulance scene is described, the body in the ambulance contains Mythgarthr-Able's unconscious mind in America-Art's body (I would guess?)

Perhaps Sir Able's story starts with the unconsciousness of Art in America and all is just a coma dream, with Michael's fetching Able from Aelfrice at the end of The Wizard being the moment right before the doctors finally manage to reanimate Art's body?

I realize I might be going into a naive and dangerously Hollywoodesque direction full of kitsch with those thoughts, but I'm confused enough to permit that ;)

Is there any definite explanation for the ambulance so far?

Thank you (and a happy new year just in case) :)

Ramon

Henry Eissler — 31 Dec 2006, 17:28 · in reply to Ramon Cahenzli

Greetings:

I'm also new here, and haven't contributed before. I hope "top-posting" isn't taboo. About the previous interpretation you quoted: I just don't get where that would come from. It seemed to me that the real Able (in America) had been in the school bus, there'd been an accident, and he was being rushed to the hospital (but wasn't going to make it.) I can't remember why I was under the impression that that Able was one of the lives cut short in Parka's string- perhaps that dream sequence was mixed into the string nightmares- but that was my take. In fact, now I think that the ambulance incident may not have actually been happening "concurrently" in this world, but that Able was growing so comfortable with the string nightmares at that point that he was finally able (pardon) to pick that one out. Also, I'm not certain that their bodies were switched by the Moss Aelf. It seemed to me that they could have been doubles. The same boy in two different worlds. It wouldn't explain why he couldn't see Berthold as his brother until the end, but that could have been an illusion (one among many.)

My question is: why did Disiri pick Art over Able? Willingness?

Anyway, that's my response. Welcome to the world of Wolfe.

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Ramon

Stanislaus — 02 Jan 2007, 18:29 · in reply to Henry Eissler

Hello Henry,

Sunday, December 31, 2006, 6:28:43 PM, you wrote:
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That one is pretty clear. Read speech which Sir Able makes to king Arnthor.

Simply, she wanted someone from a democratic country, who would know that the rulers are to serve the ruled. America seems like a best bet (and certainly so for an American author.)

Best regards,
Stanislaus <mailto:sbocian@poczta.fm>

Jestes kierowca? To poczytaj! >>> <http://link.interia.pl/f199e>