

Castleview comments

The Urth list — 7 messages, 5 voices, 19 Dec 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5283>

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Dave Tallman — 19 Dec 2008, 17:54

I recently re-read "Castleview" and I put some references and comments about it on <http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=WolfeWiki.Castleview>.

References:

- The song Will Shields and family sing (pp. 114, 232, 276) is The Ducks of Magheralin <http://www.theballadeers.com/Lyrics_D3.htm>.
- Ann Schindler rediscovers the need for faith when faced with the unknown. The cheesecake recipe becomes her rosary. The meaning of her name is "one who covers a roof with shingles, a roofer." Possibly more interesting is the connection with the heroic Oskar Schindler from Schindler's List <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108052/>>.
- The Wrangler is "Artie" (Arthur) Dunstan, and he is no doubt a descendant of the Doctor Dunstan whose house became the County Museum (p. 25), with the Excalibur-carved fireplace (p. 113-114).
- Both Magheralin and Castleview are the names of wards in Northern Ireland <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_Government_%28Boundaries%29_Act_%28Northern_Ireland%29_1971>.
- Viviane Morgan seems to combine Viviane, the Lady of the Lake <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_of_the_Lake> and Morgan le Fey <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morgan_le_Fay>. She is also the ghostly hitchhiker <<http://www.snopes.com/horrors/ghosts/vanish.asp>> of urban legend. See The Magic Animal <<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=Stories.TheMagicAnimal>> for another take on the Lady of the Lake.
- The Master of the Hunt combines many legends also:
 1. The Green Man <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Man> -- a pagan nature spirit, associated with resurrection and Spring.
 2. The Green Knight <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Knight> -- especially his beheading exchange with Sir Gawain.
 3. Odin <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odin>> -- with one eye, a dwarf-forged spear, and his eight-legged horse Sleipnir (p. 261).
 4. Leader of the Wild Hunt <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_Hunt>, which is normally death for mortals to see.
 5. Cernunnos <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cernunos>>, the Horned God, associated with stags and other horned animals.
- The hairy, smelly, red-eyed monster who attacks Will Shields is probably a troll <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll>>, especially because

of the Peer Gynt reference (see below). Trolls can turn invisible and shift their shapes, so the boy caught in the trap was probably the troll in disguise to catch Shields off-guard. Bright light can burn trolls (p. 160); sunlight can turn them to stone.

- "Rex von Madadh" means "King of the Dogs." (Madadh means large dog or wolf in Gaelic). He is a werewolf and seems to have no fear of ordinary firearms (p. 272).

- Liam Fee is a vampire because he:

1. Enters the Howard home only on invitation (p. 72).
2. Breaks mirrors and other reflective glass, like Dracula (p. 89).
3. Recruits young women like Lucie and Sancha to become vampires.
4. Lucie was probably bitten by Fee, and she would have risen as a vampire after her death, but Long Jim says that modern embalming kills vampires (p. 253).
5. Sancha's coma allowed her spirit to wander Fairyland as a vampire. Since she didn't die she wasn't embalmed.
6. Kate, Judy's mother, also had a wandering spirit (p. 204) -- it was probably vampiric mind-control that caused her to become suicidal.

- Von Madadh seems to fit the archetype of the relatively good opponents of King Arthur, like Lancelot or Accolon<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accolon>>, whereas the vampire Liam Fee is more like Mordred<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordred>>. Both seem to be rivals to replace Tom as Sally's husband (Sally is something like Guinevere <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinevere>>). Von Madadh is comfortable with French and how it should really be pronounced (p. 135), a trait Lancelot and Accolon of Gaul would share.

- Will Shield's fight with von Madadh has echoes of the fight with Accolon in Le Morte d'Arthur<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Morte_d%27Arthur>, in that Shields fights on bravely with a useless weapon and his side gets back Excalibur with a little help from the Lady of the Lake.

- Robert Borski once suggested Lucie and G. Gordon Kitty are the same. I think he is basically correct, with the qualification that this is only so after her death. Lucie's death by vampire attack seems to have caused her to change sides.

1. Lucie's last name is d'Carabas (p. 37), a name associated with Puss in Boots <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puss_in_Boots_%28fairy_tale%29>(referenced on p. 274).
2. G. Gordon Kitty only starts acting human after the death of Lucie, so it may be due to a possession by her spirit.
3. Kitty is a tomcat, but there is a suggestion that females may be playing male roles (p. 226).
4. Kitty's first words to Mercedes are in French: "Ch re Mademoiselle" (p. 243).
5. The courage and chivalry of the small cat recall C.S. Lewis' Reepicheep <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reepicheep>>.

- The "Valse Triste" (p. 53) is not from Grieg's music for "Peer Gynt" but actually a piece by Sibelius. In Peer Gynt<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_Gynt>, the protagonist encounters trolls. In Valse Triste<<http://www.musicwithease.com/sibelius-valse-triste.html>>, a dying woman waltzes with Death. It seems that von Madadh is the one who

played the piece on the organ -- he hums a "doleful waltz" later (p. 218).

Interpretations:

- The goal of the fay seems to be to find a brave champion of the blood of Arthur to fight in single combat with their champion. Even if he loses, the champion's sacrifice will allow the surrender of the Master of the Hunt/Green Man/Green Knight/Odin/Cernunnos to the beheading by Winter which he will return (ala Gawain and the Green Knight), allowing the cycle of the seasons to continue. The champion is healed and taken by boat to Avalon, as in "Le Morte 'd Arthur" and "The Once and Future King."
- Wolfe is trying in not only the old Arthurian legends but also modern legends, showing that people continue to believe in strange beings but differ in what they call them, like elves vs. aliens. The being in A Cabin on the Coast<<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=Stories.ACabinOnTheCoast>>can take many forms.

Son of Witz — 19 Dec 2008, 18:10 · follows Dave Tallman

1. The Green Man <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Man> -- a pagan nature spirit, associated with resurrection and Spring.

I know naught of Castlevue, but it should be noted that the Green Man is relevant to the Urth Cycle, for the exact same symbolic reason you've put here.

this is one clue as to the 'positive' nature of the NewSun's destruction/rebirth.

~witz

John Smith — 19 Dec 2008, 19:19 · in reply to Son of Witz

I used to live near Barrington, Illinois, which is Gene Wolfe's home. In the nearby town of Fox River Grove, there was a restaurant called "Castlevue." From the restaurant you could see a strange house that was built to resemble a castle, with crenellations and turrets. I've often wondered if it gave Wolfe the idea for his novel.

Best wishes,

Jack

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2008, 19:33 · in reply to John Smith

John Smith wrote:

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I think it likely; numerous features of GW's military college campus seem to influence the architecture of the Citadel in the BotNS, as well as the Library and possibly Maison du Chien in 5HC.

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2008, 20:11 · in reply to John Smith

Did it move around?

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Dave Tallman — 19 Dec 2008, 20:14 · follows brunians at brunians.org

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Here's a page that appears to be about that castle, with a picture:
<http://www.dupontcastle.com/castles/vianden.htm>

I looked on Google Maps for other interesting locations near Barrington, and I found Meadowsweet Ranch, a possible model for Meadow Grass in "Castlevue." On p. 127, a state trooper mistakenly calls it "Sweetmeadow."

John Smith — 19 Dec 2008, 21:37 · in reply to Dave Tallman

--- On Fri, 12/19/08, Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com> wrote:

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with a picture:
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Grass in "Castlevue." On p. 127, a state trooper
mistakenly calls it
"Sweetmeadow."

That's a great picture of the castle.

The "Castlevue" restaurant no longer exists, but you can still see the castle if you're around Barrington. From Barrington, take NW Hwy (US 14) northwest about 6 miles to Fox River Grove. Turn left on Foxmoor Av, turn right on Ashbury, and then turn right on Concord to go by the castle. (This is a tiny village, so the distance between these turns is short.)

Best wishes,

Jack
