

mary king & shell

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 27 Apr 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5588>

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Hassan Lopez — 27 Apr 2010, 20:48

My apologies to the list if this has already been discussed but one additional curiosity I've noticed on my 2nd reading of the Sorcerer's House:

In letter #21 (Bax to Shell), Bax asks Shell, "Have you ever heard of a Mary King?" (p. 157). Mary King doesn't make her formal appearance until letter #25, but it is clear that Bax is writing this letter to Shell after the events of the night described in letters #22 and #23 (the "Silver Bullet" chapters).

Why would Bax ask Shell, a prisoner (and murderer?) about Mary King, a dead resident of Medicine Man? Is there some connection between Shell and Medicine Man that I'm missing?

Roy C. Lackey — 02 May 2010, 19:47 · in reply to Hassan Lopez

Hassan Lopez wrote:

Why would Bax ask Shell, a prisoner (and murderer?) about Mary King, a dead resident of Medicine Man? Is there some connection between Shell and Medicine Man that I'm missing?

I don't know. But I've toyed with the idea that Shell may have more to do with the story than seems apparent, because he is the only letter writer who never makes it onto the stage. The compiler would be a possibility, despite the apparent differences in writing skills.

The compiler's note had to have been written at least seven (maybe nine) years after the last letter. That Shell was/is presumed dead is no real obstacle, as we have seen. All through the book, Bax keeps writing that Shell would be welcome at his house. The compiler's note indicates that someone was living in the Black house at the time he wrote the note. Shell could be living there, or he may have gone to faerie.

That he may have gone to faerie is suggested by his wanting to get away from civilization and the little story he told Bax about being at a summer camp when he was a kid (42-3). He had a parole hearing coming up in September and thought he might make it to the Black house by Halloween. This idea is indirectly supported by Martha's late (at the river battle) and seemingly pointless mention of her best friend having been run down (presumably by a motorized vehicle) while crossing a street. Bax told her that his best friend was still in prison (285).

Earlier, Martha had indicated that she had left faerie because it was such a dangerous place, yet her best friend had been killed in our mundane world. By the end of the book, she seems to have changed her tune about faerie, as indicated by her getting back together with Zwart and leaving her house to Bax.

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 02 May 2010, 21:35 · in reply to Hassan Lopez

I wrote:

because he [Shell] is the only letter writer who
never makes it onto the stage.

Not so. I forgot about Millie.

-Roy