

Home Fires questions (spoilers)

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 07 Apr 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5992>

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.

Alex Carnevale — 07 Apr 2011, 15:21

I have been a lurking reader of the list and really enjoy the conversations here. I had a few Home Fires questions & I thought those who have read the novel already might shine a light. I just finished the book last night, and it's amazing. I've always been a fan of Wolfe's more-dialogue heavy recent style (I think The Wizard should be staged), but this one was as good a thriller/mystery as he's ever done.

Here were a few things that I didn't fully comprehend after my first read. Many spoilers follow.

1) It's pretty much outright said that Mr. Blue is an Os (which might make make Holly Hollander's Mr. Blue an Os too, I'll have to check on that). He never eats or drinks. He makes the cryptic comment about destroying Earth when he talks to Skip on the ship the first time: "Suppose they could get control of all the rest by blowing up this one?" He kisses his "daughter" on the lips. His wife and daughter don't recognize him. Etc. Two things about his actions still puzzle me. The first is that I don't know if he was Charlie Blue during dinner with Chelle and Skip at the hotel before she left to join the military. Skip says he never takes off his sunglasses indoors or out in that chapter, which suggests it might be the Os, but I really have no idea.

2) Did Mr. Blue kill Zygmunt because he was onto him? Was he also the shopkeeper who sold Vanessa her furniture?

3) There must have been an EU spy (or perhaps more than one) on the ship. Who was it? Trinity? Achille?

4) Who stabbed Vanessa after she left the restaurant? Skip thinks of several reasons it's not Rick Johnson, and though he later recants, I'm not sure I believe him.

5) I'm not totally clear on everything that happened on Johanna. (Hopefully Mr. Andre-Driussi will make a timeline!) How did Chelle's firing squad execution of that soldier figure into the events?

6) Lastly, most of Wolfe's narrators are liars in whole or in part. Skip seems pretty honest, which I suppose is ironic considering his occupation. He tells us his reason for becoming a JAG and opting offworld, and it's not wholly unbelievable. As smart as he is, I don't think it's the real reason. He's going to be a colonel out there. What is his plan?

Many thanks for answers (or guesses) at any of these.

Alex Carnevale

Jeff Wilson — 07 Apr 2011, 18:06 · in reply to Alex Carnevale

On 4/7/2011 10:21 AM, Alex Carnevale wrote:

1) It's pretty much outright said that Mr. Blue is an Os

He may be one of the Os if he's not a loa, or Os and Loas could be the same thing.

2) Did Mr. Blue kill Zygmunt because he was onto him? Was he also the shopkeeper who sold Vanessa her furniture?

3) There must have been an EU spy (or perhaps more than one) on the ship. Who was it? Trinity? Achille?

I think any of the lower crew would be happy to take money in return for gossiping about what goes on shipboard. Otherwise, does the EU have any reason to put a "real" spy aboard?

6) Lastly, most of Wolfe's narrators are liars in whole or in part. Skip seems pretty honest, which I suppose is ironic considering his occupation. He tells us his reason for becoming a JAG and opting offworld, and it's not wholly unbelievable. As smart as he is, I don't think it's the real reason. He's going to be a colonel out there. What is his plan?

I'd say Skip is telling the truth about his plans, though his motives may be off. He's intending to continue living well thanks to his high-rank commission, and has arranged a non-combat role so he can be assured of coming back to Chelle when she's gotten her head together. He's still assured of some respect from the fighting men and women due to his experiences under arms on the ship, and he's not above exploiting that, and of course he won't lose his position at work as he explained.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >