

Short Sun Notes: Chems

The Urth list — 15 messages, 8 voices, 01 Dec 2012

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6328>

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Andrew Mason — 01 Dec 2012, 22:34

This is a small thing, but I think an interesting one. The question has been raised in the past why, apart from Marble, there appear to be no chems on Blue. It's worth noting, though, that there seem to be very few chems on the Whorl as well. Hound and Tansy say they have not seen any chems for many years except soldiers, and later Incus says that there are no female chems left in Viron except Olivine. So it appears that civilian chems have almost died out; and military chems would presumably stay in post for as long as the cities they are set to guard are occupied. In that case we don't need to give any special reason why chems have not come to Blue.

But are there in fact none on Blue? Someone once speculated that Cijfer was a chem: and although the indications are rather slight, I think they may have been right. The main evidence is in RTTW 6, where the Rajan says of Cijfer "[If she had been an inhuma] she would not have covered Jahlee's face, or fetched a bio to help her?". This is a puzzling sentence — is he saying that she would have fetched a bio to help her, or that she wouldn't? And how in any case is this relevant to her being an inhuma? But the significant thing here is the use of "bio"? why draw attention to the fact that Cijfer might have summoned a bio, if she is a bio herself (and so is everyone else in the neighbourhood)?

Later (RTTW 9), again wondering about who might be an inhumu/a, the Rajan says "Hide, Vadsig, Aanvagen, Beroep, and Azijin can be dismissed; I have been too close to all of them far too often to be thus deceived. In my judgment Cijfer can be dismissed as well." Why, if not because of closeness? But if she is a chem — which presumably an inhuma couldn't imitate — this would be an explanation.

If Cijfer is a chem her husband, Wijzer, must be as well. In the light of this it may be significant that in the final battle he killed five inhumi, "twice strangling one with each hand".

António Pedro Marques — 02 Dec 2012, 18:28 · in reply to Andrew Mason

No dia 01/12/2012, às 22:34, Andrew Mason <andrew.mason53 at gmail.com> escreveu:

This is a small thing, but I think an interesting one. The question has been raised in the past why, apart from Marble, there appear to be no chems on Blue.

It may be that the plan of Pas is to send bios to Blue, not chems. Chems seem to have started off as slaves - in the sense that they need no sustenance and their roles are determined by others. They are well suited to the Whorl, where the conditions are not too rough for their mechanical nature. But Blue or Green have no roads, nor controlled humidity, so even a possible function for them as heavy workers would seem to be limited.

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if not because of closeness? But if she is a chem — which presumably an inhumu couldn't imitate — this would be an explanation.

But shouldn't the wording then be more like 'of course' or even 'if I'm correct' rather than 'in my judgement', which, to me, suggests it is a complex matter?

If Cijfer is a chem her husband, Wijzer, must be as well. In the light of this it may be significant that in the final battle he killed five inhumu, "twice strangling one with each hand".

That one is immensely suggesting (suggestive?), agreed.

Lee Berman — 03 Dec 2012, 14:19 · follows António Pedro Marques

Antonio Pedro Marques: That one is immensely suggesting (suggestive?), agreed.

Ditto.

Going back to Wolfe's earliest work, is there any theme more pervasive and significant than the mystery of personal identity? I think Andrew has uncovered a previously undetected example.

Andrew Mason — 03 Dec 2012, 22:10 · follows Lee Berman

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That's possible, but my point was that we didn't really need such an explanation, given that there don't seem to be many chems on the Whorl either. Actually, my impression is that Pas was fundamentally pro-chem

- Hammerstone says he is the chems' god (understandable, perhaps, if he was artificial in some way himself). While on Urth they had been treated basically as machines, he wanted them to be more than that - chemical persons - and for this reason devised the quasi-sexual method of reproduction (which seems to be new: Marble's account of her origin implies she was mass-produced). There's a suggestion somewhere that his plan has gone wrong, because the gender ratios are wrong and so not enough children have been produced.

I wouldn't have thought Pas intended the chems to be abandoned when the expedition reached Blue, but if, as it appears (though it's not entirely clear) he intended the voyage to continue further, he may have meant them to stay with the Whorl.

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Well, I say presumably, and the Rajan would have to presume it as well

- I guess the question 'can an inhumu imitate a chem?' has never actually been put to the test. (How distinctive do chems look? The soldiers certainly have a distinctive appearance, with skin

of unusual colours; and Marble has lost her skin, so looks like a conventional robot. But ordinary civilian chems seem to look like humans at first glance - Marble, when young, was able to pose for Molpe. I take it one can work out they are chems quite easily, from the way they move, etc., but it wouldn't be obvious at first sight.)

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That one is immensely suggesting (suggestive?), agreed.

Thank you!

David Stockhoff — 11 Dec 2012, 02:15 · in reply to Andrew Mason

On 12/3/2012 5:10 PM, Andrew Mason wrote:

If Cijfer is a chem her husband, Wijzer, must be as well. In the light of this it may be significant that in the final battle he killed five inhumis, "twice strangling one with each hand".

How are those names pronounced: Cypher? Wiser? That might be suggestive too.

Andrew Mason — 14 Dec 2012, 22:45 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

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That's about it, I think, though the 'i' sound isn't precisely the same as an English one. 'Cijfer', it seems, means 'digit' (as in 1, 2, 3...) and 'Wijzer' means 'pointing device', and can include a clock hand or a compass needle. While this is not an improbable name for a sea-captain, both names would fit mechanical people. (Though it is hard to tell with Dorpian names: 'Vadsig' apparently means 'lazy'.)

Craig Brewer — 14 Dec 2012, 22:46 · in reply to Andrew Mason

Has someone posted this yet?

<http://io9.com/5968344/gene-wolfes-out-of-print-classics-now-available-as-e+books>

David Stockhoff — 14 Dec 2012, 22:49 · in reply to Andrew Mason

On 12/14/2012 5:45 PM, Andrew Mason wrote:

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aha. Thanks.

David Stockhoff — 14 Dec 2012, 22:53 · in reply to Craig Brewer

Reading about The Wizard Knight reminds me. Anybody have an opinion on the audiobook?

I listened to a part of it by accident recently (having never listened to it before) and realized that the narrator is a former coworker and friend.

On 12/14/2012 5:46 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:
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António Pedro Marques — 15 Dec 2012, 02:21 · in reply to David Stockhoff

No dia 14/12/2012, às 22:49, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> escreveu:

On 12/14/2012 5:45 PM, Andrew Mason wrote:

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aha. Thanks.

Oh, sorry, I'd missed this. Not that I have much of a sprachgef?hl for Dutch, but Andrew is right - I'd have said cijfer = number and wijzer = one/that which indicates [something], but his definitions are better. The pronunciation of ij varies a lot and (independently) may or may not be the same as that of ei. English aye is one of the alternatives, though the 'correct' one starts with the first vowel of 'ever', rather than the vowel of 'car' which we find in 'aye'.

David Stockhoff — 15 Dec 2012, 02:26 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

On 12/14/2012 9:21 PM, António Pedro Marques wrote:

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A little joke there, isn't it: the male is named after the stiff pointer, while the female is pointed at.

Darth Ed — 17 Dec 2012, 20:20 · in reply to Craig Brewer

On Dec 14, 2012, at 5:46 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:
Has someone posted this yet?

<http://io9.com/5968344/gene-wolfes-out-of-print-classics-now-available-as-e+books>

The official announcement is at

<http://www.tor.com/blogs/2012/12/19-gene-wolfe-books-now-available-again-in-ebook>

Tor announced back in April that they were going DRM-free, but I'm finding it very hard to find any evidence that Wolfe's ebooks are in fact DRM-free prior to purchasing them. Does anyone know for sure?

Thanks,
Ed

<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=Profiles.DarthEd>

Marc Aramini — 18 Dec 2012, 16:15 · in reply to Darth Ed

The new ones that I have looked at, like Castleview, are drm free. I don't know about the ones that were up before, like the best of gene wolfe, if they have been converted.

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 17, 2012, at 1:20 PM, Darth Ed <darthed77 at gmail.com> wrote:
On Dec 14, 2012, at 5:46 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:

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steve roh — 26 Dec 2012, 21:59 · follows Marc Aramini

Tor announced back in April that they were going DRM-free, but I'm finding it very hard to find any evidence that Wolfe's ebooks are in fact DRM-free prior to purchasing them. Does anyone know for sure?

From what I can tell, they are DRM-free but not "free free". The lack of DRM protection is just a convenience for people so they can use on their own personal multiple devices freely. The books have a "please don't share or distribute this content" request in the copyright section, it's based on the honor code.

António Pedro Marques — 27 Dec 2012, 10:17 · in reply to steve roh

No dia 26/12/2012, às 21:59, steve roh <sroh98 at gmail.com> escreveu:

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Sure thing. The concern is specifically about DRM, which in the eyes of many is an unacceptable way to enforce copyright.