

the mantis-Borski 5th Head star search

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 19 May 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/639>

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.

Robert Borski — 19 May 1998, 23:31

In trying to nail down which star might shine down on the twin worlds of Sainte Anne and Sainte Croix in 5HofC, mantis wondered recently:

Assuming a 30 hour day and given the 402 day year, we have a local year 1.37577 times as long as a Terran year. (Any recollection of a similar ratio given anywhere in the text? Another possible clue.)

There's at least one citation in "V.R.T." that supports numbers similar to the ones you propose. Dr. Marsh asks VRT how old he is and he replies, "Sixteen." Marsh then says, "You seem older than that--would say seventeen _at least_." (Italics mine) Meaning V. could easily be as old as someone in his early (Terran) twenties--I'm sure we all have at least one baby-faced friend in the same age bracket who could pass for much younger (hell, I was carded for alcohol purchases even in my 30s). In other words I have no trouble with these figures and they may be valid.

Re: "Shadow Child" with "two bright star eyes," in truth my notes are pretty bad, lacking even page numbers, but I managed to find this one because it is close to the beginning of "A Story

I checked "A Story" in my Scribners edition and it is the same as your Ace, with Shadow Child holding over Shadow Children. The reference I cited, however, was from "V.R.T." -- 20 pages into the narrative--and it reverses this, giving us S. Children. I wonder if this is deliberate or an editorial/auctorial miscue? It appears likely each reference has a different provenance. "A Story" appears to have been written by VRT while he was in prison, so perhaps (given VRT's abo/Annese Origins) may be more authoritative than Dr. Marsh's field notes, which cite Shadow Children. Then again, either one or the other could be typos.

In my initial response I failed to mention that Number Five makes several references to specific hours (wanting to be waked by ten, but not rising till one). Canonical hours are also apparently utilized, especially on Sainte Anne. Unfortunately, unlike 1984, there is no telling line like "It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen."

I share your frustration as well in determining valid reference texts for a work as old as FIFTH HEAD, though in my case I'm speaking more re genetics than astronomy. After all, Dolly the sheep currently lives. (Two heads down, three to go!)

One last teaser then, slightly off-topic for this thread:

After 25 years, I finally figured out what the initials "V.R.T" stand for (the V and T are readily derived from text, but the R has eluded me until recently). Was it alga or someone else who earlier wondered about this or might be otherwise interested? (I'll also save the supposition about David's mother for later.)

Robert Borski