

abo profile and a new Jeannine theory

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 18 Jun 1998

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William H. Ansley — 18 Jun 1998, 01:01

Alga wrote:

So we've actually seen how an abo or half-abo came to impersonate (or merge with) a human, and the way he did was imperfectly. So imperfectly that #5 sees through it (though I'm damned if I know how).

Tony Ellis replied:

I've never thought that #5 sees through VRT's impersonation. I've always assumed that he was just being offensive. As he says: "I had come to kill my father, and it was necessary that Dr Marsch leave." The fact that by a million-to-one chance he hits on the truth would be just typical Wolfe.

I agree with Tony Ellis here.

alga wrote:

Do we think that "A Story" was written by Marsch alone or by the JVM/VRT amalgam? If it were placed last in the sequence, surely the latter. As it is, still probably the latter. But it's still a kind of fairy tale, not anything we can really rely on.

adam louis stephanides replied:

I'm morally certain it was written by V.R.T. (See below on the "amalgam.") As you and others have pointed out, Marsch is far too insensitive, especially regarding the Annese, to write anything like it.

I agree with you here.

The only problem is that I recall reading an interview with Wolfe in which he says Marsch wrote it.

Ahhhhhhh, what does he know. He's only the author.

adam louis stephanides again:

I hadn't seen this thoery of V.R.T. merging with Marsch before, but I have to stick to my belief that V.R.T. is just impersonating Marsch in the ordinary way, perhaps aided by his shape-shifting abilities if he has them.

I agree with you again.

I don't find it implausible that he learned all his anthropology from books on Ste. Anne and St. Croix; he had three years in the wilderness to study Marsch's books, and could read more in the libraries. In particular, his knowledge of "anthropological relaxation," which another poster had cited, could have been picked up in the local library after he's realized what the Wolfes are.

I am "another poster". I agree that VRT could have learned enough anthropology from books so he could impersonate Marsch under the conditions he found himself. But I find it impossible to accept that he could just look at #5 and guess he's a clone by means of knowledge picked up this way. It seems to me we run into a chicken and egg problem here. How could he figure out the Wolfes are clones without knowing about anthropological relaxation (AR) very well. And why would he bone up on AR unless he knew the Wolfes were clones. Of course he could have some other source of knowledge about the Wolfes that we don't know about as you almost seem to imply, but, from the text, this seems unlikely and having to rely on events totally unsupported by the text is unsatisfying, at best.

5HC is full of people making guesses (spinning theories, telling "A Story", etc.) most of them seemingly wild. We know that in two cases at least (VRT as Marsch guessing that #5 is a clone and #5 guessing that Marsch is an abo) the guesses are true. I am beginning to think that we are supposed to accept that these are just guesses that do happen to be true. Perhaps there is supposed to be some "higher order" reason for this, but the outcome is that the guesses are right. I would like to build a grand theory on the idea that ALL the guesses in 5HC are true. Its too bad the they are so contradictory.

I have noticed an *interesting* parallel between the novella 5HC and "A Story". (What's with the quotes here anyway? A story is a fiction; is "A Story" then supposed to not be one?)

A *lot* has been said about Aunt Jeannine's withered legs. Well, where else do we find withered legs in 5HC?

In the dark Sandwalker climbed, climbed on hands and feet like a beast, holding the feign-pheasant in his teeth until his fingers found the priest's feet and his hands the withered legs. [p. 80, Scribners]

We have Sandwalker (an abo, maybe) going on a quest for reasons that are not clear (it seems that he is sent to the priest because of his dreams) to a priest with withered legs who apparently is dead. What good it is supposed to do is also unclear; Sandwalker seems to expect advice or council from the priests ghost. The priest lives in a cave, which is hard to find unless you have directions.

We have VRT as Marsch (an abo, probably?) going on quest for reasons that are not clear? (Wouldn't you think he'd want to avoid other anthropologists who might see through his charade, even if he found the scholars from the local universities easy to fool?) to a doctor of anthropology with withered legs, who isn't real (well is using a false name, anyway). This makes her hard to find. And what do Phaedria's friends ("the kids") call the house where Aunt Jeannine lives? The Cave!

Well, I think it's interesting.

William Ansley