

# More Wolfe-isms

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 10 Jul 1998

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Dan Parmenter — 10 Jul 1998, 11:57

So why do Wolfe characters almost always drink mate (that's ma-TAY, no accent ague here, alas) and if they don't, at least mention it? More of the Borges/South America influence?

I've also noticed that Wolfe characters are more likely to shake their heads than say "no".

I don't think there's any significance to these things, but I have noted them in quite a few of his books and stories.

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William H. Ansley — 11 Jul 1998, 01:11 · follows Dan Parmenter

I am now skipping around in my Gene Wolfe collections. One thing I've noticed that happens to his characters frequently is that they must travel without food or shelter and often with an injury. These characters then usually worry about becoming too weak from hunger and cold (and their injury, if they have one) to continue long enough to find food and shelter (and medical attention).

Severian muses this way in the mountains and, I think, other places. Cutthroat (who is pretty close to being a yaup) in "Tracking Song," thinks along these lines more than once. In "Lukora" [1] Mierax Andros is described after a long day hiking without food: "She was very tired by then, and she knew that she was no longer so strong as she had been." I am sure there are many, many other examples.

In light of this it amused me to find this passage in "Sweet Forest Maid" [2]. (This seems to me to be rather a pointless tale, but I'm probably just missing it.)

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A man would have tried to carry enough food for three large meals a day. Lenor took tea and matches and some hard baking chocolate, a box of dried figs, sugar, and a small pan. She expected to lose weight, had fasted before (although she called it dieting), and suffered no neurotic doubts about her strength of today as compared to her strength of yesterday.  
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You can't get too irritated at Wolfe for his quirks when he pokes fun at them himself.

[1] *Endangered Species*, TOR paperback, p. 356.

[2] *ibid.*, pp. 371-372.

William Ansley