

This little piggie went to market (muckle spoilers)

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 10 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1124>

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 — 10 Feb 2001, 12:46

Much of how I view the resolution of SHORT SUN is bound up in how I interpret the character of Pig, so I'm going to devote a number of posts to him.

When Hound registers Pig at Ermines, he lists Pig's home town as Nabeanntan (Gaelic for "the mountains"). Later, however, mercenary Pig disavows this, saying he had to be from somewhere just for purposes of registration. Through his testimony, we're also given to understand that he's been wandering, bereft of sight but blessed with super-accurate hearing, from the distant Mountains That Look At Mountains all the way to End Road--a journey that's taken him a year. Granted, he's rather a huge fellow, but to travel unmolested with the handicap he has, and never get lost, seems rather fortuitous. We're also told that he lost his eyes to a knife of a fellow mercenary, but that a Flier told him he might be able to have his sight restored at the West Pole.

I maintain that most of this is prevarication--deep cover meant to disguise who Pig really is--blind Tartaros, carnified in godling form.

That godlings come in different sizes is implied by both the farmer that Horn means at End Road and Hound. Pig is much bigger than the average man, but not nearly as big as the godling who tells Horn no more landers must leave the Whorl. The godlings may be only special talents like Mucor, Silk, or Seawrack, or they may have been designed as larger-than-life vehicles for the gods of Mainframe.

The Gaelic patois he speaks associates him with Mainframe, as does his connection with Nabeanntan and Flannan the Flier. He is also another maimed companion like Seawrack (whose real name is probably Screadhbhuidhe), and when he finally does arrive at the West Pole, he's given special treatment by the surgeons there, who aren't supposed to fix up Cargo.

Pig as a child was called "Freak" by his mother--something very much in character with kindly, old, snaked-haired Echidna.

Passilk riding him also seems apposite--Tartaros in the Proper Names section that preceeds RETURN is described as "Pas's loyal son," and the father-son duality may have appealed to Wolfe's Christian nature. (Also not sure--since I've yet to do a reread--but the name Tartaros may not even crop up in the actual text of RETURN--if so it's mentioned sparingly.)

And who better to safeguard Silk's mortal remains on the Whorl than a godling with special attributes--one easily underestimated by the former caldé's various enemies?

Only thing is Tartaros has killed Silk, right?

Robert Borski

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.

Adam Stephanides — 10 Feb 2001, 15:05 · follows Robert Borski

on 2/10/01 6:46 PM, Robert Borski at rborski at charter.net wrote:

(Also not sure--since

I've yet to do a reread--but the name Tartaros may not even crop up in the actual text of RETURN--if so it's mentioned sparingly.)

Tartaros is indeed mentioned in the text of RTTW, on p. 18. I distinctly remember him being mentioned elsewhere, though I can't find the place now; IIRC, it was in a discussion of Windows.

--Adam

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.