

Notes From A Second Reading (spoilers)

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 12 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1135>

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 — 12 Feb 2001, 01:58

Some responses to vizcacha's fine second reading of RTTW.

<2) It's quite obvious to me that RttW, and to a lesser extent TBotSS as a whole, is a long suicide note. Clearly Silk was in the process of committing suicide due to his grief at Hyacinth's death when Horn's spirit was infused in his body.>

Right. And how does Silk kill himself after this long contemplation of suicide? He cuts himself a bunch of times on the arms with a knife!?! Surely, as an augur who's sacrificed hundred of animals, Silk would know to kill himself much more cleanly and expeditiously. I have a friend with a troubled teenage daughter who's seeing a therapist because she is constantly cutting her arms, but never to the point of any real serious damage other than lots of scar tissue and terrified parents. In other words, given his background and experience, Silk attempting suicide by knicking himself to death is just plain ridiculous.

2a) If Pig "killed" Silk and lost his "een" afterwards, it was the quickest recovery from such massive trauma on record. Horn was added to the dying Silk, woke up, wandered out into the light, fell asleep, awoke on a darkday, and met Pig the same day. If Pig had lost his "een" shortly after an attack on Silk, he would still be bleeding.>

I'm arguing that the entity known as "Pig" never had eyes to begin with--hence has been blind since birth, or decanting, or call-up--however godlings are created--the same way the original Urth-born Tartaros was. To state it another way, the original Tartaros provided the inspiration; Pig is the knockoff and host. He does need to account, however, for his blindness, which is why he invents the story about losing his eyes to a mercenary's knife, and it also helps to explain the presence of Pas, who allegedly is trapped within Pig's conduitless mind. It's much easier than saying, "Hey, I'm Pas's older son, I was born this way." And I certainly never meant to suggest that Pig's eyes were destroyed in combat by Silk--so there is no massive trauma to begin with. His blindness--and lack of eyes--is congenital.

<Also, it's stated explicitly that this killing occurred in a manteion that attracted Pig as a looter due to the large size of its doors. Silk and Hyacinth lived in a "manse" also described as a "cottage."

Yes, but look who gives us these explicit details: Pig! Again, he needs to somehow explain the presence of Pas in him--notice also how Pig at one time tells Horn that Hierax is dead, but never mentions Tartaros--and yet not reveal he's murdered Silk. At least his lies have a few degrees of separation in them from the actual event, with enough extraneous details to make them seem plausible. And look again at what you're arguing: Silk just happens to commit suicide at the moment Horn dies on Green, even as a lumbering blind giant who's traveled all the way across the Whorl with a piece of Passilk trapped in his head casually bumps into Horn/Silk a short while after the two have merged. It's a bit of a coincidence, eh?

<2b) Somehow there is a unity among Hyacinth, Seawrack, and Kypris which I'm not sure I fully apprehend. The point about Silk going off with Seawrack, whom he has never met, is a good one.>

As I alluded to in my second Piggie post, I believe Seawrack is "harboring" someone, and since mantis beat me to the punch, I will say I intend to argue it's Kypris--last seen fleeing Echidna and her monstrous brood in LS--only she's being held hostage by Scylla/the Mother and used as the ultimate bargaining chip in her war with big daddy Pas. This, as I hope to show, resolves a number of problems and also involves Tartaros as envoy between the two sides. Stay tuned.

<5) p 183. Horn/Silk is wondering how he got to Green from Judge Hamer's sellaria with no inhumu present. He gives three possibilities: 1) Fava possessing Vadsig, 2) the presence of an unknown inhumu, 3) assistance by the Neighbors, and 4) a possibility he is "loath to mention." Anyone know what that possibility is? Is it, as suggested by several posters, that Horn/Silk himself is an inhumu? >

Well, I do have my own pet theory. If the Neighbors possess the same abilities of bilocation as the inhumu, the fragment of Passilk in Horn might allow him also to dream-jump. This presupposes that Pas/Typhon is originally from Green/Blue; hence he's an expatriot Neighbor come home--evidence which I think is supported in RTTW. (Look at the little girl in Hide's dream who's hiding under the bed from what Hide describes as men with too many legs. Don't you think she's Cilinia/Scylla, hiding from Pas? The doll that walks slow and looks in all the cabinets also sounds like the big godling who finds Horn/Silk--more evidence for alga's missing talus, perhaps.). Horn, however, refuses to acknowledge this because it means he must first accept he's Silk--something he doesn't do until the novel's end--therefore he never finishes the sentence. This same alien attribute may also contribute to his peculiar eating habits.

Robert Borski

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

Adam Stephanides — 12 Feb 2001, 10:18 · follows Robert Borski

on 2/12/01 7:58 AM, Robert Borski at rborski at charter.net wrote:
Some responses to vizcacha's fine second reading of RTTW.

<2) It's quite obvious to me that RttW, and to a lesser extent TBotSS as a whole, is a long suicide note. Clearly Silk was in the process of committing suicide due to his grief at Hyacinth's death when Horn's spirit was infused in his body.>

Right. And how does Silk kill himself after this long contemplation of suicide? He cuts himself a bunch of times on the arms with a knife?! Surely, as an augur who's sacrificed hundred of animals, Silk would know to kill himself much more cleanly and expeditiously. I have a friend with a troubled teenage daughter who's seeing a therapist because she is constantly cutting her arms, but never to the point of any real serious damage other than lots of scar tissue and terrified parents. In other words, given his background and experience, Silk attempting suicide by nicking himself to death is just plain ridiculous.

As opposed to a godling killing Silk by nicking him to death? Like many who attempt suicide, Silk 's courage failed him at the sticking-point and he only went through with it half-heartedly.

I'm arguing that the entity known as "Pig" never had eyes to begin with--hence has been blind since birth, or decanting, or call-up--however godlings are created--the same way the original Urth-born Tartaros was.

"Can yer see 'em, bucky? See me een? Where they was?"

He made himself speak. "Yes, Pig. Yes, I can."

"Gaen, hain't they? They cut 'em oot?"

He lowered his lantern and looked away. "Yes, they are. They did." (113)

Yes, but look who gives us these explicit details: Pig! Again, he needs to somehow explain the presence of Pas in him--notice also how Pig at one time tells Horn that Hierax is dead, but never mentions Tartaros--and yet not reveal he's murdered Silk.

Why did he need to confess to killing an augur to explain the presence of Passilk? Besides, with so much possession going on on the Whorl, it's the people who aren't possessed who need to explain themselves. <g>

And look again at what you're arguing: Silk just happens to commit suicide at the moment Horn dies on Green, even as a lumbering blind giant who's traveled all the way across the Whorl with a piece of Passilk trapped in his head casually bumps into Horn/Silk a short while after the two have merged. It's a bit of a coincidence, eh?

Yes, but as has been pointed out, Wolfe likes coincidences; presumably we are to see the Outsider's hand in them. Your way is a bit of a coincidence too, unless the Neighbor telepathically alerted Pig that Horn was dying and Pig should kill Silk so Horn's spirit would have a place to go.

--Adam

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