

Inhumi (RTTW spoilers)

The Whorl list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 13 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1149>

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Adam Stephanides — 13 Feb 2001, 13:41

on 2/11/01 5:03 PM, Dave Lebling at dlebling at shore.net wrote:

6) The Secret of the Inhumi. I feel a little let down here. We figured this one out in book one. It doesn't live up to some of the remarks made about it by Horn himself. As we've pointed out, how would humanity in general knowing the secret hurt the inhumi? Why would the inhumi care one way or another if the secret came out? It's so terrible that Nettle has to leave Blue because Silk tells it to her. Why? What possible defense against the inhumi does knowing the secret enable?

I agree; it's both an anticlimax itself and inconsistent with some of Horn's earlier statements (I catalogued these in posts on July 25 and Aug. 2 of last year). I was also disappointed with the lack of resolution of the human-inhumi conflict. I wasn't expecting Horn to lead the way to brotherhood between humans and inhumi, but I thought he would find either some kind of modus vivendi, or else some way to defeat the inhumi without violating his oath (I was expecting this to be his "historical role," in the same way that bringing the New Sun was Severian's and facilitating the exodus was Silk's). Instead the whole human-inhumi issue is just left up in the air (along with some other subplots).

While I'm at it, another question about inhumi, deriving from IGJ but given added point by the revelations of RTTW. At the end of Chapter 23, after "Horn" has finished explaining to Hide that the inhumi derived their intelligence from humans, as they had earlier from the Neighbors, Hide asks what happened to the inhumi once the Neighbors on Blue had been hunted to the point where it was no longer worthwhile for the inhumi to fly from Green. Horn says "I think you know," and the chapter ends. What does he mean? I can think of two possibilities: One is that the inhumi enslaved the Neighbors who had travelled to Green, as they do the humans; but since the Neighbors can "go away," I'm not sure how this would work. The other, which follows more logically from the discussion, is that the inhumi reverted back to beasts. But this would mean that, in introducing inhumi to the Whorl, the Neighbors were actually creating the inhumi as a threat for humans, by restoring their intelligence.

--Adam

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

Alex David Groce — 13 Feb 2001, 16:26 · follows Adam Stephanides

Adam wrote:

(much snipped)

But this would mean that, in introducing inhumi to the Whorl, the Neighbors were actually creating the inhumi as a threat for humans, by restoring their intelligence.

Which is what I sort of believe. I'm also beginning to wonder if Silk (and the inhumani) thinking the secret is so important is a self-delusion and attempt to escape reality much like Silk's denial of who he is.

I have some suspicion that the personal-level "contrived happy ending" (which doesn't feel so contrived to me) of RTTW is meant to contrast some grim implications for Blue & Green.

But I need to reread the whole thing.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

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David DiGiacomo — 13 Feb 2001, 13:35 · follows Alex David Groce

From: adamsteph at earthlink.net (Adam Stephanides)

While I'm at it, another question about inhumani, deriving from IGJ but given added point by the revelations of RTTW. At the end of Chapter 23, after "Horn" has finished explaining to Hide that the inhumani derived their intelligence from humans, as they had earlier from the Neighbors, Hide asks what happened to the inhumani once the Neighbors on Blue had been hunted to the point where it was no longer worthwhile for the inhumani to fly from Green. Horn says "'I think you know,'" and the chapter ends. What does he mean? I can think of two possibilities: One is that the inhumani enslaved the Neighbors who had travelled to Green, as they do the humans; but since the Neighbors can "go away," I'm not sure how this would work. The other, which follows more logically from the discussion, is that the inhumani reverted back to beasts.

The Neighbors of Green sent their slave inhumani to prey on the Neighbors of Blue. Once that source of blood was exhausted, the inhumani turned on the Neighbors of Green, ultimately destroying their civilization.

It would not be very satisfying if these very bad Neighbors could escape the consequences of their evil through astral travel. It makes more sense to me that they were damned and died in the hell of Green. Like the people of Viron, they seem to have neglected to bring their gods with them, and suffered greatly as a result.

On the other hand, the Neighbors on Blue would have had the assistance of their gods in developing astral travel. Perhaps they "went away" in order to avoid having to kill all the inhumani.

But this would mean that, in introducing inhumani to the Whorl, the Neighbors were actually creating the inhumani as a threat for humans, by restoring their intelligence.

It seems odd that the inhumani would be able to retain the astral travel ability of the Neighbors, but none of their intelligence, so I think that they may not have devolved completely.

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Fernando Gouvea — 14 Feb 2001, 11:06 · follows David DiGiacomo

About the secret of the inhumis: can we trust the text here? Since Silk/Horn is writing a "public" document, might he have put down a bowdlerized version of the secret so as to make the point that it was revealed to Nettle without thereby revealing it to us?

Fernando

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He's just a politician trying to save both his faces ...

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

Adam Stephanides — 14 Feb 2001, 22:10 · follows Fernando Gouvea

on 2/13/01 9:26 PM, Alex David Groce at Alex_Groce at gs246.sp.cs.cmu.edu wrote:
I'm also beginning to wonder if Silk
(and the inhumis) thinking the secret is so important is a
self-delusion and attempt to escape reality much like Silk's denial of
who he is.

The suspicion had occurred to me that "Horn" was wrong in thinking that the inhumis thought that their secret could be used to destroy them (since I couldn't find any place where an inhumu/a actually says so); and that they were obeying him in Gaon for reasons of their own. But I rejected this hypothesis in the end, on the grounds that it's hard to see why "Horn" would think that the inhumis thought the secret could be used to destroy them, unless Krait had told him so.

--Adam

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