

Silk's suicide

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 14 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1165>

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.

Adam Stephanides — 14 Feb 2001, 21:40

on 2/13/01 3:37 AM, Robert Borski at rborski at charter.net wrote:

"[I] found myself upon my knees besides the open coffin of a middle-aged woman. My hands and arms and face and neck were all bleeding, and an old, worn knife covered with blood was by my hand. There was no one else in the poor little house in which I knelt, and almost nothing in it that was not torn or broken." (p. 127)

To Adam Stephanides and vizcacha: are you now still going to argue that Silk has suffered a failure of nerve and cut himself not only on the arms, but his hands, his face and his neck too? Good grief; if so, it has to be one of the strangest suicide attempts in fiction. And how also do you account for the torn and broken nature of the manse's appurtenances? That Silk, while he was cutting himself all over, decided to trash the place?

vizcacha may concede on the details, but I'm not about to. It seems quite plausible to me that Silk, insane with grief, wrecked his place. Nor is it impossible that he would slash himself, too, under the same impulse. Or the cuts on his face and neck may have been accidentally acquired while he was destroying things.

In further support of the suicide theory, we are told that Silk has "oozing cuts in both his arms and both his wrists." This sounds much more like a suicide attempt than like something inflicted by someone else, either randomly or deliberately. It's certainly unlikely as a result of Pig blindly flailing about, if that's what you want us to believe (it would make more sense for Pig to grab Silk, hold tight, and then stab; but that's not likely to leave the wounds Silk receives, either). And the alternative is that some unknown person or group decides, for some unknown reason, to leave Silk half-dead and trash his house, just when he has every reason to feel suicidal. (And I don't buy Alex David Gorce's argument that Silk kills himself only passively, either; jumping off an airship doesn't strike me as any more passive than slashing yourself.)

Spectacled Bear writes:

My personal theory is that he wasn't trying to kill himself, either, but did all the damage in a frenzy of grief. Rending his garments and all that sort of thing.

This is a possibility, but given that Silk has attempted suicide before and will again, and given the Neighbor's statement that Silk's "spirit is dying," suicide seems the likeliest bet.

--Adam

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