

Requiem for a mermaid

The Whorl list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 23 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1225>

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 — 23 Feb 2001, 12:34

No one seems to have liked my Kypris-Seawrack theory, so I've done a bit of retooling and have come up with the following alternative:

Seawrack is driven from her underwater home by the Mother ("Time to leave the nest, darling"), has an arm immediately amputated, is then sexually assaulted by the surface-dweller she's been given over to (although this is not his fault, right? "Honest, officer, the bitch's singing made me do it, and she wouldn't shut up"), and then is abandoned by this same man after coming to see him as her best--and possibly only--protector in a world filled with hurt and violence.

Then a couple of years later when this same man--or maybe it's not the same man, he sort of looks the same, but he seems to have undergone radical changes in personality and is missing an eye--wants to take her away from the only world she's ever known and go off on some long-ass star junket to the-Outsider-knows-where, once again the Mother compels her to join him, along with his wife, pet, and former robot teacher (can anyone say ménage à ménagerie?), and they all live happily after. The end.

In other words, the little fishy tramp gets just what she deserves.

Harrump. Given this sort of brutalization, small wonder Wolfe gets thumbs down from so many feminists.

And yet this seems to be the version most of you prefer. Go figure.

Robert Borski

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

David DiGiacomo — 23 Feb 2001, 11:42 · follows Robert Borski

No one seems to have liked my Kypris-Seawrack theory, so I've done a bit of retooling and have come up with the following alternative:

Nice summary!

Harrump. Given this sort of brutalization, small wonder Wolfe gets thumbs down from so many feminists.

Well, he's the same guy who has teen virgin Mora expounding the "get back on the horse"/"Friday" concept of rape. Then there's Jahlee's "hello soldier" reaction to her new astral humanity.

P.S. Did Babbie bite off Seawrack's arm or what?

P.P.S. No quoted-printable on the list, please.

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

Fernando Q. Gouvea — 23 Feb 2001, 17:43 · follows David DiGiacomo

I'm not really happy with any of the explanations so far as to why Seawrack (and Nettle!) decide to return to the Whorl with Silk/Horn. At one point in the book, "Horn" says that he knows how to contact the Mother and therefore Seawrack, but that he would never do it while Nettle is alive. How does the epiphany in Remora's house change this? If what happens is that Silk realizes that he is Silk and not Horn, how does that free him to contact Seawrack? Is Seawrack so totally in control of the Mother that *her* wishes are not a factor? It doesn't seem so. So it seems a crucial question to ask why Silk feels he can ask them to come and why Seawrack and Nettle decide to go.

(Of course, one answer is that Wolfe just wanted to end the story, but that explanation isn't much fun... so regardless of what Wolfe was thinking it makes sense to look for an answer.)

Fernando

Fernando Q. Gouvea
Department of Mathematics Editor, FOCUS and MAA Online
Colby College Mathematical Association of America
Waterville, ME 04901 <http://www.maa.org>
fqgouvea@colby.edu
=====

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat
-- Lewis Carroll

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

Dan Parmenter — 26 Feb 2001, 10:52 · follows Fernando Q. Gouvea

From: "Robert Borski" <rborski@charter.net>
Seawrack is driven from her underwater home by the Mother ("Time to leave the nest, darling"), has an arm immediately amputated, is then sexually assaulted by the surface-dweller she's been given over to

I don't have OBW in front of me right now, but doesn't Seawrack claim at one point that Horn has in fact been turned over to *her*?

BTW, speaking of mermaids what's up with "Merfrow" Cijfer anyway? According to one online Dutch-English dictionary her name translates to:

1. cipher, digit, figure, numeral
2. code, secret code

And Wijzer's name means "needle", perhaps as in a compass needle, seems like a good name for a captain.

Shellac (coming into the home stretch on my second reading of BotSS, having just completed my third reading of BotLS, 2,650 pages in my editions)

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