

Merryn

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 10 Mar 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1259>

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Robert Borski — 10 Mar 2001, 14:42

BMeyer having pondered twicely:

<I asked once before, but received no responses. What happened on p. 266-67 with Merryn and the dog? Jahlee says "Merryn had trouble with animals, too." Then on the next page SilkHorn hears Severian say he wanted to show them his dog. Jahlee goes out. Silk/Horn says "I followed her in time to see the witch's gaping mouth and the utter blankness of her large dark eyes." Huh? He then says "I must remember to ask Jahlee the secret." Is that The Secret, or some other secret?>

Merryn's surprise--the gaping mouth and utter blankness of her eyes--appears due to the fact that Jahlee has just walked through a solid door. (Note that Severian locks the door behind him, but Jahlee "steps" through it seconds later.) Previously, however, Merryn has told Horn that "She has no powers." So obviously if Jahlee can walk through solids, she is not as powerless as Merryn alleges. Hence the look of surprise.

As for the "Merryn had troubles with animals too" claim, what are we told over and over and over again by Horn in the SHORT SUN series? That animals are afraid of the inhumi, because they can detect their alien nature. For years now I have been claiming that Merryn is the daughter of the Cumaeon and Father Inire; this, of course, makes her an alien, and thus explains her difficulty with animals, who can detect her otherness.

The "secret" you mention probably involves Merryn's clandestine nature; Jahlee has spent time alone with Merryn, and Horn apparently believes she knows that Merryn is an alien (she is, after all, the source of the "problems with animals too" quote), although from context ("I cannot reveal it to Nettle") he appears to think she's an inhuma.

This vitiates, of course, the generally held theory that Merryn and Severian's long-lost sister, Severa, are one and the same, but then I've also been scornful of this notion from the very beginning.

Robert Borski

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