

The Secret: Shame?

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 03 Apr 2001

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Michael Straight — 03 Apr 2001, 16:02

Could it be that when Horn talks of the secret returning the inhumani to the vermin they once were that he is speaking metaphorically?

Humans currently view the inhumani as intelligent, dangerous enemies and predators, but what if they knew that they are "really" just reptiles who derive their intelligence from human blood. They would perhaps see them as vermin that merely mimic intelligence.

All of the inhumani that hang around Horn seem very insecure and unsettled about their identity--they want to be human, they want other humans to see them as human. Perhaps the reason they are so desperate that Horn not reveal their secret is that it would be intolerable that humans know what they really are. Perhaps it would be so demoralizing that they would be less effective predators, but maybe the real threat is not so much tipping the balance in the humans vs. inhumani struggle as shattering their fragile identities.

Krait affects a superior attitude toward Horn, talking of him as cattle, but if he feels as Jahlee, Fava, and Juganu did, then that is surely a front for his insecurity. How different might their relationship have been if Horn had known from the start that Krait would be an unthinking beast if not for Sinew's blood and that Krait was continually tormented by being almost but not quite human.

-Rostrum

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