

First time poster & thoughts on Scylla

The Whorl list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 01 Aug 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1466>

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Peacefrog — 01 Aug 2001, 23:13

Hi!

I'd just like to introduce myself and start off with the cliché, "First time poster, long time lurker."

I noticed there hasn't been much activity on the list for some time now and I thought I'd take the opportunity to jump in with an observation. I recently started going back through On Blue's Waters and I noticed something that might help to settle one of the numerous debates that have gone on here.

Earlier this year, there were some who expressed their annoyance with the sudden introduction of Scylla-hiding-in-Oreb and thought that the idea seemed tacked on and unnecessary in the greater context of the trilogy. I was one of those people. It seemed as if Gene Wolfe was coming out of left field. It didn't really bother me as much as it did to some, but I thought it was weak nonetheless.

Then on page 60 of the hardcover edition of OBW, in the middle of the first paragraph, it describes Horn's prayer to "whatever god might hear" (but mostly to the Outsider) that he be given wind for his becalmed sloop. One of the things he promises to the god who grants his wish is that he (Horn) will "do anything in my power to bring them both here if they were not hear already." The duo he is referring to are Pas and Scylla.

In that same scene, Horn expresses his loneliness and isolation in the middle of the sea. The Outsider cures this condition by sending him a visitor in the form of a giant leatherskin. Is it not possible that the Outsider also allows Horn to bring Scylla to Blue just as he promised? In the form of a certain night cough we all know and love?

It might then be argued that the Pas half of the bargain was also fulfilled when Passilk came to Blue riding Horn's gray matter. In that light, it makes sense to me that Scylla would play such an "unforeseen" part in Horn/Silk's journeys.

The Outsider grants the supplications of the somewhat-faithful, but in unexpected ways. Kind of like, "Be careful what you wish for. It might come true."

If this has already been discussed before, I apologize. I admit that I haven't read all the postings here, but I have read most of them. That's all. Hope to see some more activity here soon!

Peacefrog

"A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle."

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

Michael Straight — 02 Aug 2001, 11:20 · follows Peacefrog

On Wed, 1 Aug 2001, Peacefrog wrote:

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Welcome!

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Good catch. Horn does indeed promise to bring Scylla to Blue. Although I'm still unconvinced that Pas made it to blue except inasmuch as "Pas" is now partly or mostly Silk. That is, I haven't see any evidence that Pas ever possessed Silk.

"A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle."

It's obvious to me that every fish ought to have a bicycle.

-Rostrum

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 02 Aug 2001, 09:22 · follows Michael Straight

Welcome Peacefrog.

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"do anything in my power to bring them both here if they were not hear already." The duo he is referring to are Pas and Scylla.

Thank you. Very well observed; I certainly hadn't noticed the relevance of this apparently throwaway comment.

The Outsider grants the supplications of the somewhat-faithful, but in unexpected ways. Kind of like, "Be careful what you wish for. It might come true."

I think it may be time for another pass through the Books of the [Foo] Sun, or at least Short, with the specific goal of observing everything that anyone prays for (at least to the Increate a/k/a the Outsider) ... I should not be at all surprised to discover that people invariably get what they pray for (though generally in an unexpected and perhaps difficult-to- recognize form). As a side topic, I should also not be surprised to learn that Horn keeps every promise he makes to anyone along the way. (Again, generally in an unexpected etc.)

This also adds fuel to my challenge to those too ready to dismiss SHORT as inferior Wolfe. These are challenging and subtle books, and I believe it will be several years before anyone can make any really useful assessment of what they are and do (beyond the obvious "it doesn't yield itself very well to a first reading"). I think they may prove to be the best work Mr. Wolfe has done to date.

"A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle."

A friend of mine in Berkeley had a bumper sticker with a lovely picture of a fish riding a bicycle. (Far less cartoony than you'd think.) (It may or may not be relevant to know that she was gay.)

--Dan'l

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Jerry Friedman — 03 Aug 2001, 14:29 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

--- Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <ddanehy at siebel.com> wrote:
Welcome Peacefrog.

What he said.

...

I think it may be time for another pass through the Books of the [Foo] Sun,
or at least Short, with the specific goal of observing _everything_ that

anyone prays for (at least to the Increate a/k/a the Outsider) ... I
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that Horn keeps _every_ promise he makes to anyone along the way.
(Again,
generally in an unexpected etc.)

And I wouldn't be surprised to learn that every prophecy ever made comes true. (Though in the _Long Sun_, there's a point where Incus thinks Scylla has possessed Chenille again, but he's wrong.)

All this could be interpreted as evidence of the texts' reflecting the narrators' imaginations more than any "real" events. On the other hand, it can be seen as reinforcing the plausibility of the narrative; maybe every guess the narrators make is right (in fact, an "inspired guess").

Jerry Friedman