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The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 17 Jan 1997

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Jeff Meyers — 17 Jan 1997, 19:04

Just a few measly comments about Quetzal.

First, his disappearing does not seem to be due to any extraordinary powers. He's a shape changer, to be sure. But shape changing and disappearing are two different matters. Remember how he demonstrated his ability to Horne in the tunnels. He simply pulled his black (fuligin?) robe over his head and "disappeared." Now, of course, this may have been a trick, but Quetzal tells Horne that it was how he escaped from Spider at Blood's.

Second, Quetzal does seem to be battling with his own nature. At least that's how Horne seems to see it. In the tunnel as he is supporting Quetzal during their flight, Horne offers to fall back and protect the rear from whatever danger there might be. Horne says he "offered to go ahead if he [Quetzal] would tell me what to look for." The narrative continues with Quetzal's reply: "'I want you to sleep, my son.' He seemed to suck his gums and reconsidered. 'No, to keep watch. Can you stay awake.'" (p. 374). Quetzal appears to be torn between his own need for blood and his desire to see the little company to safety? Maybe I'm missing something here, but this is not a large group of people that escape. What? At the most maybe a hundred (including the Sleepers)? Why would Quetzal have an interest in taking such a small number of people to his own planet? Does it really make sense that he waited all these years just to see to it that such a small group of humans are transported to his home world? To herd as a source of food?

Third, are we ever really told that Quetzal attacked anyone? Teasal may have been attacked by an inhum, but it doesn't follow that it was Quetzal. The other "victim" (if I remember correctly) was already dead. Other than his appearance at the end, which frightens the bejesus out of everyone who sees him, and the notoriously black behavior of his species (as Horne tells it) what exactly does he ever do to indicate that he himself has a sinister plan? The very fact that Quetzal is categorized as an inhum would seem to indicate that there are more of them. More on the LSW or just more? I don't know. But if there are more lurking around on the LSW then that would explain the attack on Teasal. Does anyone else in the story qualify as an evil inhum? Everything that Quetzal does and says suggests benevolent purposes. Is this plausible or am I missing something?

On to another issue. . .

Jordan writes:

On the other hand, he advises
that the settlers go to the wrong planet -- or so it seems (never try to
guess where Wolfe will go -- maybe Quetzal's advice was right!)

I have a question: how is it that the departing landers displayed only two options to the crew: Blue and Green? Did Pas program the landers? Quetzal? If the Green planet was the horror that Horne believed it to be, why would it even be listed as an option by Pas? If the Blue planet was relatively safe, why would Quetzal program it as an option? If both planets were dangerous (as appears to be the case) why would anyone except Quetzal program these two options. But if

Quetzal programmed the options, what difference would it make which one was chosen? Why give them a choice? And, then, when Quetzal and Remora chose the Green, why would the monitor overrule the decision and take them to the blue? There's a mystery here. I doubt if Wolfe has given us the information that we need penetrate it yet.

Jeff Meyers

Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com