

Answers Already!

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 11 Jul 1997

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m.driussi — 11 Jul 1997, 00:05

Hey Everybody,

The bad news first--this was the last question train. Gene Wolfe doesn't want to answer any more.

But he =did= answer the last questions . . .

16. Please thank Kieran Mullen for me for what he said about my writing. I don't believe it, which is a good thing. If I did, I'd be insufferable.

He asked whether Silk had "extraordinary abilities." To quibble, it depends on what you mean by _extraordinary._ He has none comparable to Mucor's, although his are much more valuable. He is a born leader, with great energy and intelligence, and superior motor skills.

17. "Who jumped or fell from the top of the airship, and why?" Horn, possessed by the mischievous, amoral Mucor, because Silk's conversation and behavior had suggested it.

18. "Describe . . . a voided cross and a gammadion." A gammadion is any figure composed of gamma-shaped pieces. The most common gammadions are the swastika and the voided cross. (The swastika is ancient, by the way, and is found in both East Indian and American Indian art.) To make a voided cross, arrange four gammas, not touching, so that the points point toward a common center.

19. "What is the etymology of _Mamelta?_" St. Mamelta was a Persian, but her name looks Greek to me. (It was common, of course, for the Greeks to pin Greek names upon non-Greeks.) Assuming that the name is Greek, my best guess is that it means "Not Careless."

20. "Mint states that she had to give up many things, `five of them very great,' to become a sibyl. Can you tell us what those five things were?" I can try, knowing I will be accused of banality. In no particular order: freedom, marriage, the right to own property, the companionship and support of her family, and motherhood.

21. Musk training the "hawk," Silk's prayers, etc. (It's an eagle.) Horn's information on the first came from "the kite builder," who asked that his name not be used. Silk's prayers (etc.) were written by Horn and Nettle, who had heard him pray many times. Please reread EXODUS, p. 371.

"How trustworthy a narrator is Horn?" Horn and Nettle are doing their best to tell you what happened, what probably happened, and what must have happened, in dramatic form. They are human beings, however, and make mistakes. (We all do, especially me.) Their account is subjective, necessarily, as all accounts are.

"Who is the narrator of the very last chapter . . . ?" I think you mean the Afterward. It was written by Hoof, Hide, and their wives -- but mostly by Hide.

22. "Why did Auk . . . kidnap Hyacinth, and why . . . did he let her go?" Because Tartaros had told him to bring a woman. He released her as he recovered from his brain injury, was able to think more clearly, and realized that Hyacinth was not the woman he should bring. (Putting it another way, he released her because Tartaros told him to. These answers are not as disparate as they may appear.)

23. "What was Quetzal's motive in wanting a thriving human colony on Green?" You will have to read The Book of the Short Sun.

24. "Why does the monitor . . . overrule their . . . choice of Green?" Because the choice had been Quetzal's and the monitor, seeing his body, realized that he had not been a human being. (You already knew the answer, and gave it yourself. Why ask me?)

25. "Does Green/Blue have anything to do with THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS?" No.

26. "Who was Hyacinth's mother?" I don't know how to answer that. She was not a character you have known in some other connection, if that's what you mean. She was the wife of Hyacinth's father, and the mother of her sisters and brothers.

27. "Is Pike's ghost really Quetzal?" No.

28. "Mint" for Marble and "Marble" for Mint. You're right, and they are my mistakes. I try hard to stop such things from getting into print. Often I fail. If I told you how bad I feel about these, you would accuse me of grandstanding.

[The End.]

=mantis=

Jim Jordan — 11 Jul 1997, 20:13 · follows m.driussi

Comments:

27. "Is Pike's ghost really Quetzal?" No.

We know that Gene believes ghosts are real. I think we would be best advised to say that Pike's ghost is ... a ghost.

Now, I suspect that Gene conceives of a ghost as a soul in purgatory. This may shed light on his other ghostlie tales....

28. "Mint" for Marble and "Marble" for Mint. You're right, and they are my mistakes. I try hard to stop such things from getting into print. Often I fail. If I told you how bad I feel about these, you would accuse me of grandstanding.

Mantis, give us the question again. I want to correct my copies...

Nutria