

Quetzal at Silk's death

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 28 Jan 1997

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CoxRathvon — 28 Jan 1997, 10:03

Fellow readers: This is the first mailing list to which I've subscribed, and I must say I enjoy reading every contribution. It really helps to share our thoughts, especially when dealing with a writer as complex and elusive as Wolfe.

My question this time pertains to Quetzal's presence at Silk's apparent death in "Calde of the Long Sun." As you may recall, Silk's floater is shot down; it lands in the prisoners' pit and Silk is temporarily buried. During his unconsciousness, Silk has a vision (for reasons I don't fully fathom, though it seems to be the Outsider's work) of his parents--all **four** parents, including his two biological progenitors (the father "tall and blue-eyed"), his beloved adoptive mother, and Calde Tussah who arranged for Silk to be developed from a frozen embryo (quite possibly an embryo engineered with special powers).

Now, when Silk awakes, he is alone with Quetzal and "pain stab(s) his neck." Hmm. Silk also has "aches" in his head, arms, legs, and chest; but Wolfe has a semicolon separating these "aches" from the pain that "stabs" in Silk's neck. What's Wolfe up to here? Does Quetzal have some kind of healing power that's a reverse of his blood-sucking lethality? Could he have injected blood, fluid, or some alien curative substance **into** Silk? Or am I nuts?

The mystery continues, even for Silk. Quetzal tells him (p. 327) "We thought you were dead." And he adds that Auk and Chenille "promised to return for your body." But later (p. 350), when Silk meets Chenille at Blood's villa, Chenille says, "We knew you were alive. His Cognizance said there was a pulse." This makes Silk ponder (while the others are discussing Quetzal), and I quote from p. 350:

Privately, Silk was trying to reconcile Quetzal's telling Chenille that he, Silk, was alive with his saying that they had thought him dead. He had lied in one or the other, but why?
"Bad thing!" Oreb told everyone.

Now, does anyone have a clear insight into this? To review, Silk gets buried and suffocated, has a vision from the Outsider, wakes with a painful neck in Quetzal's presence, and is told by Quetzal that he was thought dead, only to hear from Chenille that he was **not** thought dead. I've been thinking hard about Quetzal's motives as I re-re-read the four books, but I'm mystified about this incident.

--Henry Rathvon

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