

SPOILER for BETA-2!

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 29 Apr 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/601>

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Robert Patterson — 29 Apr 1999, 17:09

Warning: this post is a spoiler for Samuel R. Delany: The Ballad of Beta-2

"Mantis" may be correct in that the colonists have left the ship. It has been awhile since I read it, but as I recall the action takes place at least in part on board the ship. The basic premise is that the generation-ship left Earth right before the discovery of FTL travel thru hyperspace, so this ship is the only human ship ever to have traveled across an interstellar void in normal space.

It turns out that they had a near-disastrous encounter with some kind of (as I recall) highly intelligent energy life form that only lives far away from gravity wells. Humanity has never discovered it because they only travel through normal space near stars. I'll send more specifics when I get home and can look at the book again.

Robert Patterson

<http://home.midsouth.rr.com/rpatterson>

-----Original Message-----

From: whorl-errors at lists.best.com [mailto:whorl-errors at lists.best.com] On
Behalf Of Michael Andre-Driussi
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 1999 2:58 PM
To: whorl at lists.best.com
Subject: (whorl) re: BETA-2

Don't forget

Samuel R. Delany: THE BALLAD OF BETA 2

This would fall sorta into the "Colonies from " category, though like Long Sun, the colonists still live in the ship.

Good call, Robert Patterson! Refresh my memory further: IIRC, BB2 is about an anthropologist (from Terra or the civilized sphere) who is examining the hulk of the colony ship in orbit--I remember he translated one doorway label as "sacrifice to the water gods" or something like that, a literal take on "navigation." His primary clues are contained within the epic poem of the colonists (I thought they were on the ground by then). So it is a "discovery of Troy" type of deal, in the sense of using garbled heroic poetry to figure out what happened on the long voyage.

So spill it: what happened to the colonists (I remember something about some unexpected radiation washing over the ship out in the void)? And any other details you can recollect (how long was the voyage, what target star, etc.).

=mantis=

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