

Codename: Alex

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 01 Oct 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/648>

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Alice Turner — 01 Oct 1999, 19:07

No spoilers for after what Alga's read, btw.

You are a gent, Alex, but I suggest that we take off the gloves. People who haven't read the new book simply shouldn't download the Whorl list for a while; they can cavort around in Urth if they need a Wolfe fix. We need to talk!

So say I after blowing off most of my day to steam all the way through it. I will go back more carefully, but I was carried away.

What Alex was protecting me from was my shock at the live burial of the inhum, which seemed a truly inhumane death--of course I didn't know at that point what would happen later in the plot. And what I suggest to you at

this point is that this is Krait's secret, simply that, imprisoned and deprived of food and stimulus, the inhum can survive for a long time in a kind of shriveled hibernation from which they quickly recover when given fresh blood. We have to assume that Horn almost improbably early on realizes that he can use this knowledge to his strategic advantage--but why not assume this? Horn seems to have a natural military bent, like Mint and Severian. (Well, I guess Mint's is not entirely natural.) He is quick and decisive and drives a hard but fair bargain with the inhum when the time comes. Is it so illogical to think that he foresees how he can do this? After all, he is perhaps the one person on Blue who can contemplate an inhum without complete involuntary horror. David Lebling's funny blurb is also true.

-alga

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

Alex David Groce — 01 Oct 1999, 19:46 · follows Alice Turner

But if this is Krait's big nasty secret, how does it reduce the inhum to (inexact quote, I'm at work) "little more than animals." If the secret strategic victory over the inhum is to bury them all alive, I think both Horn and the inhum are vastly over-reacting to the threat! The inhum pulled out of the ground are back to their normal nasty selves after a quick fix of cow, and certainly don't seem reduced to animal level. Mind you, I don't think my "intelligent blood" thing is the exact secret either--it has to be something people could DO to the inhum (don't let them drink blood? that's already the goal... force feed them stupid animals? also unlikely).

I think the burial is MORE inhumane now, if the inhum (as seems) are somehow conscious for a long period/forever. Horn's approach to this is interesting, in that it's Silk-like, since he doesn't let them stay that way which would be monstrous, but (very vaguely) Machiavellian in that he USES his solution to this moral problem to win his war.

The intelligent blood idea does present the cruel vision of species that, in order to remain morally and intellectually aware, must do something morally repulsive. Essentially, to have any

will, they must exercise their will in a malevolent way.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

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