

Horn's Hints

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 05 Oct 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/658>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

David_Lebling — 05 Oct 1999, 15:15

As promised, these are hints Horn gives us about the inhumi's secret:

p. 217: The inhumu had told me that we human beings were the cattle of his kind. They drink our blood in preference to the blood of animals merely because they prefer it (this is what he said) ...

p. 315: He [Mehman] and Evensong waited outside while I explained what I had learned from Krait on Green. ... "Will you do whatever we tell you, if I release you?" I asked the inhuma. "Or shall I make good on my threat?" ... "I warn you, if you will not I am going to spread my knowledge everywhere."

p. 317: "It's just occurred to me that you inhumi are rather like a kind of lizard I've noticed in my garden. It can change colors ... While I acknowledge that you inhumi are a much higher form of life, it seems to me that the principle is about the same." ... She only nodded. "You are correct, Rajan."

p. 350: "If only we protected one another, they would all be idiots or worse. As it is, they always get enough to keep them going."

p. 372: "I couldn't kill them here and now, if that's what you mean; but I know how they might be returned to the mere vermin that they once were -- mindless, hideous, blood-drinking animals seeking their prey in Green's jungles."

p. 374: "Krait told me why they have to have it as he lay dying. ... He was thinking of the thing that linked him to me, and me to him -- of the bond of blood between us."

p. 375: "That's the kind of thing the inhumi must have done before the Vanished People reached Green -- reshaped themselves to look like the animals they hunted ... " "If only we cared about each other sufficiently. If only all of us loved all the others enough, they would go back to that. They would still think them horrible creatures, and they would still be dangerous, as the crocodiles in this lower river water are. But they would be no worse."

There may be others that I've missed, of course, particularly any that are early in the book.

I think the foregoing fits pretty well with the theory that it is only by drinking the blood of intelligent creatures that the inhumi established and maintain their own intelligence. In addition, the inhumi may get their attitude from humans as well -- that is, they are monsters because we are monsters.

If that is the secret, then we have a certain nice symmetry with parts of the Christian worldview. That is, we are threatened by evil, but the evil comes from ourselves. If we protected each other from it, it would disappear. In short, we should all follow the Golden Rule. I won't speculate on

how this would fit with Catholic (or any other) theology, but it seems like too good a match.

This story is, first and foremost, about love. Not love as in sex or lust (though that's there, too), but love between father and son, son and father, husband and wife, even between pet and master. The secret of the inhumis is that love will protect us from them.

--- Dave Lebling
(aka vizcacha)

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

Jim Jordan — 12 Oct 1999, 11:00 · follows David_Lebling

At 03:15 PM 10/5/99 -0400, you wrote:

I think the foregoing fits pretty well with the theory that it is only by drinking the blood of intelligent creatures that the inhumis established and maintain their own intelligence. In addition, the inhumis may get their attitude from humans as well -- that is, they are monsters because we are monsters.

If that is the secret, then we have a certain nice symmetry with parts of the Christian worldview. That is, we are threatened by evil, but the evil comes from ourselves. If we protected each other from it, it would disappear. In short, we should all follow the Golden Rule. I won't speculate on how this would fit with Catholic (or any other) theology, but it seems like too good a match.

This story is, first and foremost, about love. Not love as in sex or lust (though that's there, too), but love between father and son, son and father, husband and wife, even between pet and master. The secret of the inhumis is that love will protect us from them.

--- Dave Lebling
(aka vizcacha)

Well, that's what I was going to write, having finished the book last night and reading the posts today, but you beat me to it. Completely agree. I think we have all we need to know the secret now. Remember also that Wolfe discusses devils/fallen-angels in other stories, and calls them servants of God who are used to chastise/punish people. The inhumis have the same role here. It might be useful to consider how exorcisms are done, both those in the Gospels and in Acts, and the Roman Catholic rite.

Nutria

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