

Secrets & Lies

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 07 Oct 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/666>

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Alice Turner — 07 Oct 1999, 19:01

Krait's secret first turns up on p 295 and it is indeed what Horn/Silk threatens the revived inhumani with. Check bottom of p 310: "On Green I learned the secret the inhumani wish nobody to know...I can threaten them as well as save them." And again on p 315 when, to the inhumani, "I explained what I had learned from Krait on Green."

But how in the hell did he know that the buried inhumani were alive? Or is the secret just that and that he would tell all of Blue to burn them or shoot them or whatever---nah, too simple.

Okay, here's something new. Horn calls Krait a liar, p 305, and I'm sure he is, but in small ways, a tease really, a mischief-maker, but I don't think he is a real liar with malevolent intent. What do you make of Krait's saying that Seawrack "lies constantly" p 307? I think it's something to watch out for, as in Hy's case. We've all been agreeing that she is a human woman altered by the Mother, and Krait (whom I would trust here) says she is, also 307. Well, hmm. Do you think she knew what that ring was and that it would lead Horn to the Neighbors? I do. So whose scenario was she following? And what side is she on in that case? Horn says that Krait wants her on board the lander--wonder why. She already suspects his nature, p 329.

What I really like about the "double" writing is that, although Horn is writing about what has already happened, for the most part, he is also having things happen to him as we go along---so the ending is not by any means already decided.

Oh, btw the leatherskin has six legs, not eight, and three jaws. I have trouble with the three jaws--the best I can come up with is a Big Mac or club sandwich, with the jaws being the pieces of bread or bun.

-alga

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

William H. Ansley — 18 Oct 1999, 01:08 · follows Alice Turner

I have just finished OBW. I really appreciate the fact that all of the discussion of this book was restricted to the Whorl list. I have been archiving it, while continuing to read the Urth list, until I had a chance to read the book. Now that I have done so, I have caught up on what you all have been saying about it: a lot of very interesting stuff, as usual!

Now that I have the necessary data, my trivial mind is ready to spring into action, as I will demonstrate below.

"Alice Turner" <akt at attglobal.net> wrote:

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and

ansible at cix.compulink.co.uk (David Langford) wrote:

Like the three gripping segments of a drill chuck, perhaps? Of course our author must have seen a lot of those in his time.

Alga,

The leatherskin very likely has twelve legs rather than six or eight. The passage in question is:

The leatherskin, one of the largest I have ever seen, stood with six massive legs and half its weight on the starboard gunwale, over which silver water cascaded. [p. 62]

If this creature has only six legs and all of them are on the starboard gunwale (rather a tricky balancing act in the first place), then how can the gunwale be only bearing half its weight?

Since this seems to be an aquatic beast (although this is made a bit doubtful by the fact that it has claws instead of flippers--clawed flippers perhaps?) it makes sense (to me, at least) that it has more legs than the land animals.

(As an aside, I find these eight-legged creatures unlikely. Unless their bodies are much longer relative to their height than beasts of comparable size on earth--I would say they'd have to be roughly three times longer--I can't see how the extra legs would do anything but get in the way. Of course, there is no reason to think that the animals on Blue don't have much longer bodies, except that Horn doesn't mention it. And since his descriptions of most of the animals he sees are pretty vague, this isn't much of an argument against it.)

I agree with Dave about the jaws. I imagine that it has a fixed upper jaw (like pretty much any large creature on earth) and two separate, separately-hinged lower jaws (as if you split a crocodile's--for example--lower jaw in half). The two lower jaws can close (with great force) against the upper one, like "the slamming of double doors." [p. 61]

The three jaws suggest that this creature belongs to a different group than any other legged animal (that is, excluding the devil/bat fish, etc.) native to Blue mentioned in the book. If so, it could very well have a different number of legs.

William Ansley

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Charles Dye — 19 Oct 1999, 11:02 · follows William H. Ansley

"William H. Ansley" <wansley at warwick.net> writes:

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I think the animals *are* significantly longer than the equivalent Urth creatures. Horn describes his elephant's howdah as a "long tent," and at one point he manages to pile at least nine adults

on top of the beast. (No trilhoen, however.)

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