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The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 25 Nov 1999

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Alice Turner — 25 Nov 1999, 10:31

The Rodent opined:

At 08:09 PM 11/16/99 -0500, Slimina of the Green Goo wrote:

2. There have been a lot of guesses about "the secret of the inhumis," and the front-runner for a while was that it was simply that they took on (or could take on) aspects of the prey along with the blood; when they encountered a sentient race for the first time, it revolutionized them. Another conjecture has to do with their obviously being able to survive a long time without sustenance in a mummified state. But later thinking is that it's more complicated than that--it's a secret that if known could destroy them--and that Wolfe just hasn't given it to us even in clue form yet.

Arguments invited.

It's Rat Time, Slimina!

To begin with, courtesy of Kieran:

Horn: "If only we cared about each other sufficiently. If only all of us loved all the others enough, they would go back to [mindless beasts]. We 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."

Evensong: "That is the secret, what you said?"

Horn: "No, of course not." [p.375]

So, let's invert that. The inhumis take on our characteristics. We are not very nice people: enslaving others, raping wimmin, etc. What if we become good, "Green Man" types, like the forerunners of Blue? What would the inhumis become then? Good guys! Hey, is that why old Quetzal becomes a good guy, because of hanging around and being near Silk?

Inhumis are animals, "underpeople" of Cordo Smith, but of a different sort.

Their salvation depends on and proceeds from human salvation.

My guess. It think the clues are there, but I may be taking them wrongly.

Slavering Nutria of the Dripping Jowl

I think you are correct, but that this is not the secret. I also think that "hanging around and being near" doesn't have much, if anything to do with it; it's the actual ingestion of blood. The two people we know Q bit had in common only their youth. Teasel was a young girl and whashisname, Oosik's son, was probably no more than 18. And he certainly got a gleam in his eye inspecting those troops of probably mostly teenage girls. But Horn's "No, of course not!" seems to imply that the actual secret is something else. I also think that your premise is too straight-forward and goody-goody for Wolfe.

-slimora

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

Jim Jordan — 29 Nov 1999, 09:27 · follows Alice Turner

Slimorina wrote:

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Good poynts. Guess we gotta wait....

Nutricious

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