

Inhumu's secret

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 21 Jan 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/760>

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.

Roberson, John — 21 Jan 2000, 08:07

Further speculations on this: I think the "you are what you eat"/chameleon theory must be a part of the Rajan's threat to the inhumu and therefore their secret---this seems to be a part of what Krait must have told him as he was dying. When he reasons that they hibernate and are very weak when unearthed, and captures Jahlee, he offers her a cow to break her fast. Could it be he has figured out that, after hibernation, they have begun to lose their intelligence and human shape as their bodies use up all the human blood/DNA they've ingested, and that if captured in their famished state and offered a cow, that they'll feed ravenously and perhaps adopt a cow's low level of intelligence and docile nature? I admit I don't have a lot of textual basis for this---does Jahlee seem "dumber" after she drinks cow's blood? (But the Rajan doesn't let her drink her ravenous fill---perhaps because he wants her intelligent enough to parley with and do her dirty work against the Hannese?) She does seem to assume a human shape pretty quickly, however, so that ability yet remains. I dunno....idle speculation, perhaps. I think Gene has simply withheld (or just not emphasized enough) a few vital clues that would help us all peg the Secret exactly, so: sweet misery until the next book....

What do you think of this angle?

-Ram

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

Kieran Cleary — 21 Jan 2000, 14:51 · follows Roberson, John

Ram wrote:

does Jahlee seem "dumber" after she drinks cow's blood? <

Maybe. When Horn exhumes Jahlee, he says:

Horn: "I warn you, if you will not [obey me] I am going to spread my knowledge everywhere...."
Jahlee: ... "What do you want from me?"... Horn: .. "You are quick."... Jahlee: "I used to be. Tolerably so." [p.315-316]

On the other hand, she's able to come up with some pretty sly rejoinders:

Horn: "It's just occurred to me that you inhumu are rather like a kind of lizard I've noticed in my garden. It can change colors, and because of its size and shape, and because it remains so still, it is easy to take one for a piece of brown bark, or a green leaf, or even the flesh-colored petal of a rose. While I acknowledge that you inhumu are a much higher form of life, it seems to me that the principle is the same." Jahlee: ... "You are correct, Rajan". [p.317]

Which I take to mean, Yes we are a superior form of life, Rajan.

A thought struck me recently: how on earth could Green be Lune (this from someone who quite

likes that idea)? I mean, are we to seriously expect Horn to bounce his way around the jungles Neil Armstrong-like in search of Auk?

Kieran C.

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