

Dr. Crane's plot

The Whorl list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 21 Jun 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/847>

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akt — 21 Jun 2000, 13:05

From Alex:

Yes. In fact, the "Silk for Calde" graffiti shows up shortly after, and Horn lets us in on the (strong likelihood anyway) that it wasn't one of the schoolboys who wrote it. And this is before the populace would (I think) realistically get going on its own from just Silk's streetside conversation with Blood.

Once we meet Crane's "gang," which isn't until a lot later, I think we can have no doubt as to who effected the graffiti campaign. Certainly it's not "spontaneous," in any way, not, at first, genuinely populist. Nor, of course, is Hy's letter to Silk.

On the prophecy thing--does anyone in the books ever attempt to make a prophecy (augury) or even have a dream that doesn't foreshadow events to come? I think that although there's no time-travel going on here, lots of things seem as locked in as in BOTNS. Interestingly, Silk's first enlightenment is sparse on scenes from the future. Is any explanation (other than Silk's "talent" and self-fulfilling prophecy with respect to the thefts in Lake) given for the wild success of augury/random-page-opening?

Well, this is standard practice in fiction, even non-genre fiction. We (readers) always make subconscious or semi-conscious note of dreams, prophecies, fortune cookies, Tarot cards and also the ravings of the mad.

From Rostrum:

On the other hand, Q. knows about the special embryos and seems to have had his eye on Silk for a while. It's possible he initiated some of the "Silk for Calde" stuff and that he plays as big a role behind-the-scenes as Crane. But I'll have to wait for my re-read of the series in preparation for reading OBW to argue the point any further.

Yes, about the embryos, not necessarily that Silk is one, though, given Silk's age, and Q's residence in the Whorl, it is possible. Hasn't had his eye on Silk, though--first notices his name in flying by Teasel's window, and we are present at their first actual meeting, which I don't have time to look up. I don't see a clear motive in his being behind the campaign, but that of Crane & co. is as clear as glass.

I should add that part of my insistence on Q as Pike's ghost (which I have sadly had to abandon) was that I believed this to be a ruse where he could get a look at Silk before Silk saw him.

-alga

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

Michael Straight — 21 Jun 2000, 14:12 · follows akt

On Wed, 21 Jun 2000 akt at attglobal.net wrote:

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Well, this is standard practice in fiction, even non-genre fiction. We (readers) always make subconscious or semi-conscious note of dreams, prophecies, fortune cookies, Tarot cards and also the ravings of the mad.

But in most books this is kind of a wink at the reader; we're not supposed to ask why the madman's ravings should foreshadow events in the book. In the Long Sun, however, one of the important points is that the religion of Pas, including divination via sacrifice is fake. We're supposed to ask questions about what exactly is going on with the religious stuff, so we need some other explanation for why the prophecies are coming true, e.g. the Outsider, some sort of psionic talent of the superembryos, some sort of influence from the sacred windows, etc.

-Rostrum

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Alex David Groce — 21 Jun 2000, 15:34 · follows Michael Straight

Rostrum said:

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Thanks. That's what I was trying to say. Lots of fiction does this, but seldom are the people in the fiction TRYING to foresee the future and managing to do so--when they do, unless the work is genre fantasy, we look for a scientific explanation or a metafictional conceit (Muriel Spark pulls the latter off quite a lot). My hypothesis is that Wolfe wants it to be possible to explain this "scientifically" by assuming Silk's mysterious talents go this far (Silk seems to be the only one actually doing this in Long Sun) or some such, but really to lean us towards the assumption that Silk is being given signs by the Outsider, who clearly doesn't mean "you will be given no help" in quite the way you or I would.

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

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Jim Jordan — 24 Jun 2000, 10:56 · follows Alex David Groce

At 03:34 PM 6/21/2000 -0400, you wrote:

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Alex David Groce (agroce+ at cs.cmu.edu)

I suggest the Ruler's words to Westwind in "Westwind," to the effect that He prefers not to interfere openly, but behind the scenes. I suggest that Silk's "mysterious talents" are quickened by his baptismal encounter with the Outsider, and with the arrival of Oreb (both the Holy Spirit and also from Germanic lore) as a kind of cryptic guide. Thus, it's not just Silk's talents, but those talents as guided by the Outsider.

Nutria

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