

(SPOILERS) IGJ first impressions

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 24 Jul 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/870>

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Alex David Groce — 24 Jul 2000, 08:37

I finished this on Friday, but haven't had access to email over the weekend. Also, Saturday I talked at length with another Wolfe addict who had just finished it, which clarified my thoughts (I hope).

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Some random points:

1. The inhum's secret (maybe) becomes a little clearer, in some aspects: Krait's _mother_ drank from Sinew, and I believe it may be that when the inhum spawn their children take their spirit (in some sense) from (a particular, I assume) victim of the parent.
2. The cover illustration plus a rereading of the description makes me think the Neighbors may have borrowed their habits of dress from Jack Vance's Pnume.
3. The first half or so of the narration, especially the storytelling contest, was as engrossing as anything Wolfe's written, in my opinion. The last half of IGJ suffered some from middle-book-syndrome, in that questions are raised just so we can get the answers later.
4. Wolfe does a brilliant job of conveying Horn's feelings via the narrative: in OBW Horn dwells at length on his time on the boat with Seawrack, and it is clear that he prefers his memory of that time to his present surroundings; IGJ has exactly the opposite: Green's nightmare is the last thing he wants to think about.
5. The parallels with Severian are growing stronger and more interesting: (1) Horn(/Silk) is now "accidentally" enacting sacraments (the Eucharist at the Neighbors' table is my favorite scene from IGJ); (2) he has his own sword; (3) he's actually been mistaken for a torturer (we're

reminded that a Patera's costume is not unlike that of a torturer).

6. A further parallel is the storytelling contest; here, however, the differences are emphasized: Horn is a participant in the contest, rather than the judge. One amusing similarity: in CITADEL, the contest is never judged, while here, if it is, we're not told who won each time.

7. I think that another parallel may exist: it seems possible that this travel-between-worlds thing Horn gets from the Neighbors may have something to do with the Coridoors of Time.

8. It's nice to have Oreb back.

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

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