

Silk's body or another?

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 08 Aug 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/911>

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Fernando Q. Gouvea — 08 Aug 2000, 13:03

**** On Tue, 8 Aug 2000 17:29:09 +0100, "Ian Smith" <iancsmith at 4unet.co.uk> said:

Ian> would be that bloke from 'the book of Silk'. Yup, I'm proposing that Ian> both Horn AND Silk are occupying a third (unknown) body at the Ian> 'present of OBW and IGJ, which would explain both the narrator's lack Ian> of recognition of being in Silk's body and also his circling a Ian> physical description of Silk out of Gaon in order to 'locate' him. As Ian> I said I'm reading through again to check, and anyone with evidence Ian> against please step forward.....

Could someone cite chapter and verse about this business of a physical description of Silk being circulated by Horn? I just reread OBW, and didn't find it. It's always possible I was momentarily distracted, but I think the closest passage is this, on page 18:

"Silk may be here on Blue already, after all. I have dispatched letters to Han and some other towns, and we will see. It is convenient, I find, to have messengers at one's beck and call."

...and so on. Nothing here about a physical description, though he says

"... I write new letters subtracting some facts and adding others, composing flatteries and threats I hope will bring this town and that to my assistance..."

One can almost read this passage as if he's trying to convince other towns to acknowledge *he* is Silk... though I don't think that's what it really means. Note also, that on page 25, he says:

"No more letters. What farce!"

I still think the likeliest reading of all this is that Horn knows he is in Silk's body, but it's clear that for complete clarification one must know what happened in the Whorl, and we don't at this point. It would be useful for someone to collect all the references we have so far about this. For example, there are references to Pig, to Olivine getting him the augur's robe and giving him her eye. There seem to be references to some contact with the head of the chapter in the Whorl (Incus?). Has anyone tried to collect all of these?

Fernando

Fernando Q. Gouvea
Department of Mathematics Editor, FOCUS and MAA Online
Colby College Mathematical Association of America
Waterville, ME 04901 <http://www.maa.org>
fqgouvea at colby.edu

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Yesterday upon the stair
I met a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today --
I think he's from the CIA.

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

Adam Stephanides — 09 Aug 2000, 23:29 · follows Fernando Q. Gouvea

Fernando Q. Gouvea wrote:

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I think I'm the one who started the "physical description" bit, and since the passage you quote is the one I was thinking of, I was evidently wrong. What happened, I think, was that I originally reasoned that if Silk were on Blue, he would be trying to stay hidden (otherwise he would be known already), and so the only way Horn could find him would be through a physical description. Then, not having a copy of OBW with me, I misremembered this as Horn explicitly mentioning a physical description.

But the broader mystery remains, and is even sharpened by IGJ: if mantis's interpretation of the spirit-transference scene is correct--and I believe it is--and if Horn knows it's in Silk's body that he was placed, then he shouldn't be hoping to find Silk on Blue, in any body. Of course, something may have happened on the Whorl that we don't know about to change that.

--Adam

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