

IGJ <Spoilers> Fava's Second Story

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 24 Aug 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/978>

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.

Kevin J. Maroney — 25 Aug 2000, 14:48

At 06:26 PM 8/24/00 -0500, Endymion wrote:

It seems that just by observing a human the inhuma was able to shape itself as a human (although maybe a rough version of one) and talk. Unless all of this ability came from its parent feeding off of humans previously? By feeding on humans I would suspect the inhuma can then perfect its imitation.

This gives more support for my belief that the inhumi have some sort of telepathy to enhance their predation, but it's weak support. We know that they camouflage themselves as their prey; feeding on humans merely makes the camouflage better.

Kevin Maroney | Unplugged Games
kmaroney at ungames.com | (212) 777-1190

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

Endymion9 — 24 Aug 2000, 18:26 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

Just reread this section and have some observations and questions.

Observations:

The little inhuma started off its life in an egg.

Then emerged from the egg and found a swamp/pond.

She had claws.

She swam with fishes and fed on fishes.

"And every day they grew stronger and fewer, for the fish on which they fed, fed on them."

But there is no mention of assuming fish form. In fact after seeing Incanto's leader "For a time, she ran behind him on all fours like a dog." So four clawed legs? So does everything on Green have four legs? (Neighbors, inhuma) I see no description of how many legs a grabber has. Many animals of Blue have eight legs. Why the 4 legs vs. 8 legs difference in the two planets?

Just by seeing Incanto's leader and not yet having fed on him she assumes human form. "She stood up as he did, and toddled along behind him, leaving her baby footprints in the mud."

And is able to talk in the human tongue.

"The little girl whose adventures I have been recounting to you knew nothing of heroes and swords, ...

...as the grabber was dead she overcame her natural shyness sufficiently to speak to the leader who had killed it and saved her, offering her timid thanks and after some hesitation venturing to say that she thought his was the best shape for everyone."

It's funny that Incanto suddenly switches from Fava's point of view to his own and retells the story.

"Can You talk?' I shook it. It swung its head from side to side, then nodded. Already its lizard's face was softening a little, melting."

"What's your name?' 'Mee.'"

It seems that just by observing a human the inhuma was able to shape itself as a human (although maybe a rough version of one) and talk. Unless all of this ability came from its parent feeding off of humans previously? By feeding on humans I would suspect the inhuma can then perfect its imitation.

Question:

Why did Fava say that what the inhuma were doing in the water was bad?

"As soon as she laid eyes on him, she knew that everything she and her playmates had been doing in the river was wrong, and pulled herself up onto the bank."

Is she saying that by seeing a human she realized that being a simple animal/lizard, eating and surviving as a lizard, is wrong? That it is better to be a human? What would make an animal feel this way upon seeing a human? Why would this thought even enter an animal's brain?

Dennis/Endy

<http://home.mindspring.com/~endymion9/index.htm>

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

Peter Westlake — 25 Aug 2000, 10:46 · follows Endymion9

At 18:26 2000-08-24 -0500, Endymion9 wrote:

Just reread this section and have some observations and questions.

...

"For a time, she ran behind him on all fours like a dog." So four clawed legs? So does everything on Green have four legs? (Neighbors, inhuma) I see no description of how many legs a grabber has. Many animals of Blue have eight legs. Why the 4 legs vs. 8 legs difference in the two planets?

They're different planets! They might exchange microbes via meteorites, but life would have evolved separately. The particular numbers might be significant to the story somehow; does anyone think there is any more to this than providing Horn with an eight-legged horse?

Just by seeing Incanto's leader and not yet having fed on him she assumes human form.

"She stood up as he did, and toddled along behind him, leaving her baby footprints in the mud."

And is able to talk in the human tongue.

I wondered about that. It's not unreasonable in this universe, perhaps, where memory is chemical and replicated throughout the body. The infant inhumu presumably talk to one another in the Common Tongue?

It's funny that Incanto suddenly switches from Fava's point of view to his own and retells the story.

I took this to be him writing about what had happened after the fact, not something that he said at the time. But then it's harder to see how he "got into the story". What was that all about, anyway? If this is Fava's own childhood, as we must strongly suspect it is, did he get into **that** and change it? A bit of time travel between sentences? Or is this the telepathic link that's invoked to explain seeing the trees?

"Can You talk?' I shook it. It swung its head from side to side, then nodded. Already its lizard's face was softening a little, melting."

"What's your name?' 'Mee.'"

It seems that just by observing a human the inhuma was able to shape itself as a human (although maybe a rough version of one) and talk. Unless all of this ability came from its parent feeding off of humans previously? By feeding on humans I would suspect the inhuma can then perfect its imitation.

Question:

Why did Fava say that what the inhuma were doing in the water was bad?

"As soon as she laid eyes on him, she knew that everything she and her playmates had been doing in the river was wrong, and pulled herself up onto the bank."

Is she saying that by seeing a human she realized that being a simple animal/lizard, eating and surviving as a lizard, is wrong? That it is better to be a human? What would make an animal feel this way upon seeing a human? Why would this thought even enter an animal's brain?

She has a lot of human in her, though, via the blood supply left (as I read it) in the egg by her mother.

Sbearo.

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