

sex secret

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 28 Aug 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/985>

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Robert Borski — 28 Aug 2000, 12:09

alga having written:

<In the next paragraph he says "You feared that jungle, I know; so did I at times." I think the "you" is Sinew. But what on earth is "our" as in blood? Yours and mine, Sinew because I'm your dad? Yours and mine, Krait, because you just took a nibble from me and I'm sort of your dad too? Yours and mine, Outsider? The blood that you, Sinew, and Krait share (re his mother), part of which I contributed genetically (this is ridiculous). It can't possibly be sexual, can it? Twenty years ago? How the hell do they reproduce? Those women and "brutal giants" do seem like part of a primitive fertility rite.>

Your question about reproduction is one I've pondered myself, but mainly in the Green-Blue-Green transmission route. Do I have this right? An inhuma flies to Blue from Green during a conjunction and then spends the next seven years attempting to slake her blood thirst. During the next conjunction (or the following one?), she returns to Green, where she mates with an inhumu (or might this happen while still on Blue?), reproduces, and the resultant egg incubates in the uv-rich climate of Green until it hatches. (Are there no equatorial hot zones on Blue? Is Green that much closer orbitally to the sun?) This seems to me like an extremely awkward reproductive strategy--even if the inhumi lay multiple eggs. It also means in Krait's case that he must undertake the hazardous hejira to Blue probably during the first conjunction he witnesses, but if he wants to reproduce go back again later. ("Hmmm. Food or sex? Well, you can never be too thin.") Also: how exactly does the blood-to-egg core personality transfer work? If I'm an inhuma, does the first, middle or last person I dine on imprint my offspring? And do the male inhumu's sero-victims contribute nothing?

All these questions notwithstanding, I'm still leaning toward the theory that the inhumi secret will involve some physiological aspect of their biology, either digestive or reproductive, and note the extensive use of sewer imagery in the series so far, from the fouled sewers in New Viron, to Inclito's municipal wonders, to the Styx-like necropolis on Green. The Latin word for sewer, of course, is cloaca. Make of that what you will.

<I hope I'm not awarded the dreaded Borski prize for this.>

Nah. Not nearly wild, speculative or loopy enough, alga. Try harder next time.

Robert Borski

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