

Notes for Podcast: *Stranger in Olondria*, Book 2**Book 2, Chapter 4, At Sea**

In this chapter, Jevick is already at sea. Sten, his father's foreman, calls him "Ekawi," his father's title.

(Read bottom of page 33)

Jevick doesn't care for his new status. He thinks that his homeland is "monotonous." He notices the vocabulary and the pronunciation of the sailors, and wishes he were one of them. This would seem like a real contradiction in one who is also so fond of books. Perhaps he is like Herman Melville, who went to sea in a whaler and came home to write *Moby Dick*.

But he also has contempt for the other merchants of his rank.

Read top of 37.

The main event of this chapter is Jevick's meeting of Jissavet, who is afflicted with a genetic disease that causes her hair to become red and her body to waste away. She asks Jevick if the book he holds is a *vallon*, the Olondrian word for book, and then asks him to read to her from it, though she does not understand Olondrian. He does so. He is impressed with her audacity.

Read on page 43.

We do not know it at this point, but this chance meeting will drive the plot of the novel.

Book 2, Chapter 5, City of My Heart

The chapter begins with poem, Bain, City of My Heart, and a description of the city as seen from the sea, just as a traveler approaching the harbor would see it. Jevick doesn't need to hire an interpreter because he speaks Olondrian, but has never been in the city before so he struggles to understand the hotel keeper and what must be done. He is so excited to finally be in Bain that he rushes out into the streets, without guide or dinner. He finds a bookstore.

Read on 54.

Jevick loves his life in Bain. He helps sell pepper in the market, but spends his afternoons wandering the streets, often with girlfriends, one of whom tells him, "You won't know Bain until you've been to the Feast of Birds." For the reader, that sets up another set of questions.

Book 2, Chapter 6, The Feast of Birds

The Feast of Birds turns out to be a kind of carnival in celebration of Avalei, the Goddess of Love and Death. An interesting combination for a goddess. Against the advice of the hotel keeper, Jevick joins the festivities and wakes up in a brothel, his purse and everything of value missing. As he tries to leave, he has a vision of Jissavet, who calls to him.

Book 2, Chapter 7, From a Somnabulist's Notebook

Jevick continues to have visions of Jissavet. He does not know what she wants, but she will not let him leave the island. Sten returns to Tyom. Jevick returns to the hotel, where the hotel keeper gives him a small room, high in the building, that he used to rent to students. He researches his condition. He learns much about Avalei, who is associated with grain, perhaps similar to Persephone in the Greek tradition. The cult of Avalei is being suppressed by the adherents of the Stone. Jevick reads that those possessed by ghosts, called "angels" were formerly considered saints, but are now considered deviant and insane. Jevick confesses to his hotel keeper that he is tormented by an angel. The next day he is arrested by soldiers who will take him to the Blessed Isle to be examined by the Priest of the Stone.

Questions for Book 2:

1. Jevick finds his homeland "monotonous." He does not value his new status as his father's heir. Instead, he would rather be almost anything else, even a sailor or a galley slave. What makes him so unhappy with his lot in life? Isn't he pretty lucky?
2. Jevick throws himself into the carnival of the Feast of Birds. Should he have taken the advice of the hotel keeper and stayed indoors? Could he have observed the procession without participating in the dancing and drinking and other activities? What would you have done?
3. The girl in the brothel gives Jevick something she says is "what the gods eat." This is probably a hallucinogenic drug. Did this drug cause Jevick to see Jissavet? Did it produce his sickness? Is he succumbing to mental illness? Or is he really being tormented by a ghost?