

Appian's reluctance

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 17 Jul 1998

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Dan Parmenter — 17 Jul 1998, 11:24

From: m.driussi at genie.com

Re: the incident with the Book of Mirrors. Granted that Appian knows more about Severian's destiny as future autarch than Severian (who is clueless at that point), and granted that Appian is suprised at the sudden request, thinking that he had more time, still I think this episode is more an innocent mistake rather than anything sinister by Appian.

Oh, I never thought it was sinister per se, like I said, maybe a little foolish and/or vain,

IMHO this is a human touch, a showing that it isn't quite a vast conspiracy, with everybody-but-Severian having 100% knowledge of not only him but their own role to play; or, the antithesis--that even the finest alien conspiracy is subject to bungling from participants who really should know better.

Definitely. I think that this is indeed, one of the more appealing aspects of the series. It's difficult to imagine Agia being any kind of willing participant in anything other than advancing her own cause, yet she clearly plays an important role in several of the key incidents in Severian's development. I suppose many of the "players" are unwitting. Thecla's role seems to be to teach Severian something about love and to perhaps give him a bit more "book learning" outside of the practical arts of his profession. But her presence at the Citadel is also due to her relationship to Thea, and by extension Vodalus. Perhaps part of her role is simply to give Severian an idea of what life in the House Absolute is like. And of course the roles change and the agendas change. Juturna's saving Severian could serve the ends of either "side", so what impulse guided her?

D