

Do I have to use a grip on you mama?

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 13 Oct 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1163>

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.

Dan Parmenter — 13 Oct 1998, 07:07

From: "Robert Borski" <rborski at coredcs.com>

Stinky the First (ne Reechy) aka Ymar the Almost Just was a torturer autarch. And I'm not sure what you mean by a RNA transfer (especially since in all likelihood Palaemon isn't human).

As most of us are well aware, all the aliens in the New Sun series have mythic, as opposed to saintly, names. (Father Inire's is a little hard to discern, but it's Abraxas.) Three characters, however, have names that are **both** mythic and saintly:

Paeon/Palaemon (who are the same entity), and Merryn.

All three of the above, I'm arguing, are cacogens attempting to pass as humans, and all wear very lifelike human masks. Only their eyes reveal their nonterrestrial origin; this is why Palaemon wears an optical device for a disguise, just as Merryn wears a mask (this also accounts for why Merryn looks the same as the time she did when Sev the toddler ran an errand to the Witches Keep. And it's all right if witches have spooky eyes<g>).

Merryn's apparent agelessness could easily be explained by other means: in fact, she and the Cumaeen are the very characters who tell us what's available in Urthly cosmetic surgery. Merryn (I believe) even implies that they know how to do some of these things, which would fit in well with their seeming roles as both intelligence operatives and keepers of obscure knowledge.

As for Palaemon, I don't buy your hypothesis, though I admit that my reasoning is mostly at the "gut" level. As I've suggested before, Severian has several predecessors, only some of whom happen to be different versions of himself. The "forces of good" had it in mind that a torturer might be the one to bring a new sun before Severian came along and Severian himself plays a role in disseminating the idea. Palaemon went through some of the same experiences Sev did (being exiled, having some adventures with a cool sword) but proved to be a bit of a cul-de-sac, new sun-wise. Indeed, I believe I've even argued that Palaemon could almost be a candidate for the "Severian" of Gene Wolfe's proposed novella (discussed in OTTER) that evolved into BOTNS. Somehow, my intuitive sense of literary appropriateness is better served by Palaemon being human, a teacher/mentor for Severian.

Barring these "intuitive" arguments, perhaps I need to find examples of characters with mythic/saintly names.

D