

Green Man

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 26 May 1999

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Timothy Reilly — 26 May 1999, 05:30

Why does the Green Man tell Severian that Agia can be found "above ground"?

Michael Andre-Driussi — 26 May 1999, 15:51 · follows Timothy Reilly

Hello Timothy Reilly!

You wrote:

Why does the Green Man tell Severian that Agia can be found "above ground"?

Since the Green Man can supposedly see into the future, and we have Severian's future in hand, the Green Man's phrase may relate to the mine at Saltus (which is the next place Severian will see her--"above ground" on the surface rather than "under ground" in the mine shaft), or, since this seems rather weak, it may refer to the widow's cabin in the mountains, where Agia comes down the stairs from the attic where she was hiding--definitely "above ground."

Still later, she comes down from the sky on a winged thing and plucks him up from behind enemy lines--come to think of it, that was "above ground," too.

Or maybe the Green Man is just bluffing.

=mantis=

Peter Stephenson — 31 May 1999, 09:14 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

Michael Andre-Driussi wrote:

Hello Timothy Reilly!

You wrote:

Why does the Green Man tell Severian that Agia can be found "above ground"?

Since the Green Man can supposedly see into the future...

Or maybe the Green Man is just bluffing.

(late again, holiday trip to Ravenna, Urbino, life's hard. sigh.)

I haven't gone back to check, but reading the Book before my impression was very strong (in fact, I was quite certain) that the Green Man was simply giving out standard platitudes like any fortune teller in a fairground. I saw this as an example of Wolfe's brilliance with paradox --- he really does come from the future and so can `predict' it, but of course he doesn't know all the details about everyone's lives, so he has to make them up. Then Severian's first guess, `he simply meant that she was alive', is the right one; the entirely intentional oracular quality of the utterance has allowed him to reinterpret it some other way.

corncrake