

The Power Behind the Phoenix Throne

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 16 Jun 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1689>

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Roy C. Lackey — 16 Jun 1999, 07:14

Mitchell,

I enjoyed your Inire posts and have no substantive arguments with them, just a couple of sidebars.

<snip>

and as a bonus vanquish the "megatherian" enemies of mankind and escape the icy fate of a prematurely dying sun.<<

If you are referring to Robert's Undines, at least one of them survives the flood.

<snip>

He goes on to lament that his "cousins" help only reluctantly and do not seem to regard Urth, still less the Commonwealth and its Autarch, as worthy of special consideration. It was Inire's job to plead on behalf of Urth to seemingly indifferent ears until the Epitome was prepared.<<

<snip>

It is easy to see an emissary of the Hierogrammates on a mission here, taking a very personal interest in the fate of the peoples of Urth.<<

No argument; just curious: Just _what_ is Inire's interest in Urth? Why should _he_ care? (And don't tell me "little girls": they could be had on thousands of other worlds in the universe for a lot less trouble. <g>) And how/why is it that he is exempt from the short lifetime of others of his kind?

If the Hieros put the hoodoo on Urth's sun -- in this cosmic game of crime and punishment -- then the punishment is merely symbolic, at least for the overwhelming majority of mankind, who are scattered on untold numbers of planets throughout the universe. Urth, as the birthplace of mankind, becomes a scapegoat for the rest of the species, which makes the drowning of Urth's denizens all the more pointless, since they are no more "guilty" than all the other people on all the other worlds, who escape the wrath of the Hieros unscathed.

Roy

Mitchell A. Bailey — 16 Jun 1999, 12:34 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Thanks, Roy

...

and as a bonus vanquish the "megatherian" enemies of mankind and escape the icy fate of a prematurely dying sun.<<...

If you are referring to Robert's Undines, at least one of them survives the flood.

...

Well, of course the 'megatherians' I had in mind were really Erebus, Abaia, et al, themselves more so than their creatures.

"Vanquish" need not necessarily mean slay, anyway. Their opposition to the New Sun has, in the end, been defeated. If that doesn't kill them, they'll just have to deal with it.

In fact, like some other Urthlings (and Severian!) I seriously wonder how the New Sun is in fact detrimental to the 'megatherians'. It has been suggested that they derive their power from the Sun; possibly on Ushas they would have more power available. And I hardly think they drowned!

(or, conversely, as has been suggested and noted in the N&A of LexUrth, they are responsible for whatever hyperdimensional "sun tap" was sickening the Sun to begin with, in which case the remaining Megas on Ushas are a bunch of hurtin' puppies)

...

It is easy to see an emissary of the Hierogrammates on a mission here, taking a very personal interest in the fate of the peoples of Urth.<<

No argument; just curious: Just _what is_ Inire's interest in Urth? Why should _he_ care? ...

Good point. My nebulous idea was basically that he was appointed (by Tzadkiel?) for this mission. And perhaps his capacity for empathy for the Urth peoples, and his thaumaturgy, qualifies him.

And how/why is it that he is exempt from the short lifetime of others of his kind?...

I wondered that too, but it seems to be the case. Over the millenium of the Age of the Autarchs, any way you cut it, he has lived several centuries or more. Even if he can duck into some kind of stasis every so often when he's 'off duty', his lifetime on Urth would still subjectively have to add up to centuries over the course of his stewardship.

It appears to me that not all the Hierodules are of the same race from which Famulimus and Barbatus come. Wolfe seems to indicate that different races have different functions. The Cumaeen obviously is alien and is as different from F&B as she is from us, and very ancient to boot. It would appear that Inire, who clearly has lived a millenium by Sev's time (or by Ymar's time, if you subscribe to the time-in-reverse model) is by all of the evidence not of F&B's race and is not necessarily limited to a lifespan of about 20 years. Ossipago is considered to be a Hierodule, and it's an automaton! Apparently 'Hierodule' "holy slave" is a distinction of allegiance and purpose, not of species identity.

If the Hieros put the hoodoo on Urth's sun -- in this cosmic game of crime and punishment -- then the punishment is merely symbolic, at least for the overwhelming majority of mankind, who are scattered on untold numbers of planets throughout the universe. Urth, as the birthplace of mankind, becomes a scapegoat for the rest of the species, which makes the drowning of Urth's denizens all the more pointless, since they are no more "guilty" than all the other people on all the other worlds, who escape the wrath of the Hieros unscathed.

Now that's a great point, and a topic worthy a series of monographs in itself. Let me throw out a few ideas on this:

- 1) How do we know the other human colonists are not 'punished' in some fashion, or have their own peculiar challenges? We don't get to observe them.
- 2) Wolfe suggests (in the Saltus mine, on the Ship) that the descendants of human colonists have altered in the intervening millenia. They could be so far sundered as to not share responsibility with Urth.
- 3) It is strongly suggested that the "hoodoo on the Sun" was the result of the sins of imperialistic expansionist Earth colonists in the Age of Myth, but I don't claim to know whether it was implemented by deliberate action on the part of the Hieros, or simply a "reap what you sow" natural consequence, e.g. the sin made it possible for the megas to inflict this on Urth for their own selfish purposes.
- 4) I suppose you could put a "sin makes redemption possible" sort of summation on the whole situation. Urth, having been the birthplace of the sinful imperialists, with the coming of the New Sun becomes Ushas, the birthplace of the regenerated harmonious green humankind who won't even hurt a plant. Once Ushas is established, I suppose it is possible the blessings could be distributed from there to the rest of the human galaxy.