

Station Sign

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 22 Jun 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1695>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 22 Jun 1999, 10:15

Re: that symbol in the presence chamber that makes Jonas say he's on Urth. I didn't mention this before, but yes, it =has= always reminded me of the special individualized symbols at every jaunt platform in Bester's THE STARS OUR DESTINATION--this is a case where everybody (well, nearly everybody) can teleport via psionic power, but to keep things orderly they usually "jaunt" from platform to platform, and to aid the process and avoid misjump, each platform has its own glyph-sign-thingie, to serve as a mnemonic.

Which is interesting because the presence chamber =is= something of a jaunt platform!

=mantis=

Roy C. Lackey — 22 Jun 1999, 15:52 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

mantis wrote:

Re: that symbol in the presence chamber that makes Jonas say he's on Urth.<<

Actually, it's less than obvious from the text that the teratoid sign is what prompted Jonas to say that. He had been walking with Sev like, well, the automaton that he is. The crimson sign was on the outside of the door to the chamber, not in the chamber itself. Jonas may not even have noticed the sign. When Sev hears a tread upon the stair he forces the door open. Once inside, the door closes and the light brightens. After looking around the chamber he examines Jonas's face, which is "still fixed", but looks like the face "almost, of a man about to wake...". Then, after ignoring what Sev has been saying to him, is when Jonas says: "I know where we are," ... "and raised one arm stiffly to point toward something I had taken to be a folding screen." Sev asks where, and Jonas answers "On Urth", then walks across the room to the panels.

To me, it seems that it is the sight of the panels which stirs Jonas out of his funk, causes him to cry, and make his pronouncement. Clearly, Jonas has had experience of such panels and knows how to operate them. His tears are shed because, at last, he has found the means to get back to wherever he came from.

He had been confused since he got zapped, obviously, because he'd known for years that he was on Urth. He had earlier had a "flashback", so to speak, to a time when there had been a blackout aboard a spacecraft he had been on. He may be in the throes of another such flashback when he sees the panels, causing him to forget that he was already on Urth, but recalling another time he had been on Urth in the presence of such mirrors. This raises the issue: where had Jonas had prior knowledge of these kinds of mirrors? After all, they are not, evidently, a common means of transportation around the universe.

Roy