

urthquake and Cyriaca and Fred

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 02 Dec 1999

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 02 Dec 1999, 07:40

me wrote:

in a pinch Severian can draw from a starship's battery, or even somehow the energy of an earthquake (or was that the energy of sunlight on the ground?). In any event, Severian is something of an energy vampire.
[snip]

Roy wrote:

A minor quibble: My take on the earthquake is the exact opposite of that; the earthquake was the effect, not the cause, of the energy exchange. Severian was killed again (or at least should have been; he was hit by a bolt of energy from a Star Wars-like weapon), only he can't be killed by virtue of some sort of semi-divine fiat until the New Sun comes, just as he should have died from the beating earlier that night. The text makes clear that Urth is too tired and energy depleted for earthquakes--not to mention the unlikelihood of such a coincidence. However it was accomplished, the earthquake was the byproduct of the effort to preserve Sev's life.

So Roy, are you saying that the resurrection at the Convulsor was accomplished via the more usual white fountain energy rather than any other source? I can't really tell from your post.

I can certainly see the urthquake as being a =side effect= of the process (that is why I mentioned the solar/thermal/ground energy, after all); but see, then analogy trips me up, since I immediately think of the big ship's lights going out when Severian tried to resurrect the murdered steward (detective work reveals that Severian somehow =reached deep= within the structure he was standing on in order to draw energy). And I also begin to wonder why there was no quake when he was killed in the beating earlier that night--that is, what is the difference between death by beating and death by Convulsor? Is it merely a matter of scale? A beating shaves off life-force bit by bit, so a trickle recharge might work to resurrect--but no, it is clear that Severian =dies=, he doesn't get energy (?) until death; and death is death (drowning, fiacre crash, avern poke, disease, etc.). But the Convulsor must be worse than a barroom brawl; say it is like being drawn and quartered in an instant. So now, along with the usual infusion of life points, the resurrection process must involve reknitting limbs to body, decrisping brain, etc.

Is that it, then? That this one particular job is so big that the healing phaser beam from the sky has to be set on "11," which means that when the beam hits Severian it splashes a bit, causing a quasi-quake (not a real quake) in the very local area (falling wall, broken court, bent keep)? Just log it on the "Claw's One-Time Tricks" list, entry three, after "turn water into wine" and "put an extra soul into the body of the dead soldier"?

Re: alga's notes on Cyriaca as mother of Severian. I was immune to this candidacy, since it first appeared (as so many things do) in Clute's essay, to be briefly mentioned and discarded. But there are all sorts of suggestions of that kind of thinking in what Cyriaca says to Severian; she seems to want to make him her dreamchild; and she has attributes that we associate with his vaguemother. So when Severian shows mercy and forgiveness to her, he is also showing mercy and forgiveness to his own mother (in a way less deadly than the mercy he granted to Thecla).

No doubt Catherine felt a warm glow at that moment.

Re: Fred Hoyle--thanks for the tip, Damien, I'll watch for the book.

=mantis=