

More Infrequently Asked Questions

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 29 Dec 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2055>

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Talarican — 29 Dec 1999, 22:46

I must be suffering advanced enigma intoxication, seeing riddles under every bed.

II:VIII When Sev immerses himself at Saltus in his memory of the undines' puppet-show dream, just before being kidnapped by Vodalus' cultellarii, he has a revelation: "Then very suddenly I ... understood why it was that Abaia had sent me this dream, and had sought to enlist me in the great and final war of Urth." He declines to explain his sudden enlightenment about the origin and purpose of his dream, preferring to go on with subsequent plot events (the kidnapping). What did Sev now understand, and how did he extract that enlightenment from the dream?

IV: XXIII After the wounded Severian is rescued by the Autarch, he revels in a memory (or hallucination?) of Master Malrubius lecturing "Look to your 'Q'", followed by a rambling complaint about his thankless and nearly futile efforts to educate the apprentices, ending with the unfinished sentence "There was a boy, but he...". But he what? (" - but he betrayed the guild and was sent away" -?) And was this an authentic memory of something the "real" Malrubius "actually" said to young Sev at some point? To whom is the remembered Malrubius referring here? Palaemon, perhaps? Is Malrubius old enough to have taught Palaemon as an apprentice? (Is Palaemon perhaps younger than we have been led to believe, having met with some injury during his sojourn which crippled and nearly blinded him? Became or was replaced by a cyborg or cacogen or some such, as has been speculated before? Come to think of it, Palaemon shouldn't be much older than fifty, at most sixty, in the year following Sev's exile, if Palaemon was a young man of Sev's age or a bit more thirty years previously as related by Winnoc) Or, as is strongly suggested by the text, is this a hallucination rather than a memory, with Sev projecting his own recent disgrace backward into his recollection of Malrubius, i.e. the boy referred to is Sev himself (the real Malrubius of course died years before Sev advanced to captain of apprentices). Another possibility in this same vein is that Sev projects his knowledge of the exile of young journeyman Palaemon into this vision, as Sev had already encountered Winnoc by this time. Or is this perhaps an eidolonic visitation by the Malrubius-persona of the Hierodules' thinking engine which sends him Malrubious-aquastor later, in which case what purpose did it serve? Or some combination of all of the above?

III: XXVI When Sev and Typhon arrive in the cavern behind the eyes of Mount Typhon, Sev asked how they rose the mountaintop after seeming to fall DOWN a steep descent in that floating luge or rollercoaster conveyance. Typhon replied "Why should gravity serve Urth, when it can serve Typhon?..." Did the old empire master antigravity? Could that have been one of its sins, antigravity being an "unnatural act", so to speak, like FTL?

Peter Westlake — 30 Dec 1999, 11:34 · follows Talarican

At 22:46 1999-12-29 -0500, Talarican wrote:

... some excellent questions, and not the usual ones either ...

III: XXVI When Sev and Typhon arrive in the cavern behind the eyes of Mount Typhon, Sev asked how they rose the mountaintop after seeming to fall DOWN a steep descent in that floating luge or rollercoaster conveyance. Typhon replied "Why should gravity serve Urth, when it can serve Typhon?..." Did the old empire master antigravity? Could that have been one of its sins, antigravity being an "unnatural act", so to speak, like FTL?

They must surely have learned to direct gravity at will, or been able to fake it convincingly. There would be plenty of room for machinery in the mountain, too.

I don't think it should be seen as a sin, since the flyers aren't.

Spectacled Bear.