

Truncated Play

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 21 Nov 1997

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m.driussi — 21 Nov 1997, 00:49

Reply: Item #7230818 from URTN at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET#

Tony Ellis,

Re: the length of the play and the completeness of the drama we are shown. First off, please count the number of times the stage direction "stage darkens" appears--this traditionally indicates the end of one "act" and the beginning of the next "act." (The dramatic equivalent of chapters, I suppose.) I count five, myself, but I also think the play has been cut off: so six acts, at least.

Second, if this =really= is all the play that there is, then how do you explain the presence of the following characters in the list preceeding the play: Angelic Beings, The New Sun, The Old Sun, The Moon? In other words, if the play really is supposed to end with Baldanders going berserk (which might be a good stunt for getting stuff from country bumpkins but I could've sworn that Talos and Baldanders admitted that it was a bad, bad mistake to pull such a trick on the hierodules--a mistake that may have cost Baldanders the autarchy), then why would these other characters be listed? (They seem logical to the flow, and they seem to appear in the Ushas or "real" enactment of the play.)

(My theory, fwiw, is that Baldanders always really does go nuts when they get to that part of the "play." Under his cool, sluggish exterior is not only a detached scientist but also a raging maniac. One of his hot buttons is "superstition," and based upon his inability to maintain his composure during the drama, the idea that the New Sun will triumph in the end sends him into a real mindless and murderous rage.)

(Reminder: Baldy jumps twice--once at Ctesiphon's Cross in Nessus, the first time we glimpse the play; and second at House Absolute, when the text of the play is given.)

You write:

"How else can the play end but on a knife-edge, with the New Sun battling Darkness and everything else still in doubt?"

Uh, is this a trick question? <g> It can end with the triumph of the New Sun, naturally! Be careful--you are assigning allegorical qualities to a play already steeped in mythos: the battle at the truncation is not between "the New Sun" (a character on the list who has not yet appeared in the play--though he probably was spotted by the countessa) and "Darkness" (a character who does not exist in the play); rather, it is between the Familiar (a torturer) played by a torturer and Nod (a titan who would retake the throne of Zeus) played by a titan who would retake the throne of Zeus.

Re: "Agia as a typo for Jolenta." Nope. Granted, I can see how that might appear to be a

mistake, since Agia never appears in the play. However, Agia really =is= Lilith to Severian. Jolenta, who only plays Lilith in the stage production, is really only a victim with a capital V; a living puppet.

=mantis=