

How many acts?

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 22 Nov 1997

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Charles Dye — 22 Nov 1997, 08:15

Mantis writes:

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.

What always strikes me about this play (I guess I was reading Tom Swift when the teacher covered Persian creation myths) is a sort of pervasive Shakespearean quality. Characters are constantly entering and departing as the actors are recycled. Comedy by mistaken identity, plus we get at least one fool who demonstrates his foolishness through a torrent of clever wordplay. And the ends of acts are marked by rhyming couplets.

Not only are we missing the seventh act, but we can't be sure we've seen all of the sixth. Look at the last line (Severian's, of course.) It rhymes and it scans, but it's too short. Lupine ambiguity

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