

PARADOX MEN and our man in antarctica

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 15 Dec 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2870>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Michael Andre-Driussi — 15 Dec 2001, 00:01

Before I lose the trace thoughts altogether, I should mention a few notes on THE PARADOX MEN.

(I did ask Damien Broderick, and sure enough, he has read TPM, but to my surprise he doesn't like it so much--for him it isn't enough like Van Vogt.)

1) The main "New Sun" thread is the Van Vogt situation of the seemingly common man awakening to his latent super powers. There is also a solar connection, and some neat time travel, with paradoxes about determinism and free will, and a retroactive "optimization" (for those of us who continue to think of our Severian's life as the optimization of an earlier Severian).

2) There is also a strange little tidbit regarding "Jonah." In TPM they have these high-risk solar stations that mine the sun directly for this concentrated energy stuff called Muirium. A ritual that the sunmen have is to roll the dice to see if they will survive the shift they are about to begin: they insist that the dice roller be a novice. (A glaring flub: Harness goes on about how the odds are against it: "there had been one chance in six of throwing a seven." Well no, not with two six-sided dice! Seven is the most common throw; two and twelve are the hard ones [harder than one-in-six, in fact]. One in six means 16.6%, that is, like rolling a one on a single die. And if they ain't six-sided, then pray tell what? Actually they are called cubes, so they must be six-sided. Odd.) The most experienced sunman, a man named Miles, explains all this, and says that he is disqualified from rolling the dice because he is a Jonah.

They also want the hero to roll because his face resembles that of an "old friend," who is presumably the genius proto-sunman, Muir.

The hero rolls and the dreaded, unlikely number seven comes up, meaning that the ten crewmen will die.

Later on, it seems like fate has been cheated because the station is going to be visited ahead of schedule and evacuated. But it turns out Miles and the rest have all hidden themselves in the hold to prove the dice right. And they all dematerialize when the station's load hits critical mass.

Jonas (aka Jonah), Miles, resemblance to an old dead friend (who actually =is= the same person with amnesia), death by dematerialization. Hmmm.

Our Man in Antarctica

Yes, our fellow Wolfe-reader Henry Kaiser is actually living at the South Pole right now. He has sent me digital photos of Mount Erebus. He is having high adventure in an alien world. He told me several months ago that he would be giving little reports on NPR once he was in antarctica,

but I haven't managed to catch any of them, if they are happening.

=mantis=

Sirius Fiction
Has Moved To
<http://www.siriusfiction.com/>