

Unsheathing Long Swords

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 06 Mar 2002

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Michael Straight — 06 Mar 2002, 17:48

As a little break from our more involved discussions, here's a down-to-earth question that probably has a straightforward answer.

How does Severian quickly unsheath his sword when it's slung behind his back? I'm imagining it being long enough that he can't simply reach back and pull it out (his arm not being long enough to get it all the way out of the sheath). And if its length is comparable to the span of Severian's arms, I'm not sure how he gets it out at all. Am I wrongly imagining Terminus Est as much longer than it really is?

-Rostrum

Andy Robertson — 06 Mar 2002, 17:20 · follows Michael Straight

----- Original Message -----

From: "Michael Straight" <straight at email.unc.edu>

How does Severian quickly unsheath his sword when it's slung behind his back? I'm imagining it being long enough that he can't simply reach back and pull it out (his arm not being long enough to get it all the way out of the sheath).

In the bit in COTC where he is captive and riding on the back of the balachutharium he refers to the correct way of drawing the sword being to "grip the quillions in one hand and the throat of the sheath in the other and by opening the arms to left and right to draw the blade clear " - by which I assume he would have had to unsling it first.

hartshorn

Michael Andre-Driussi — 06 Mar 2002, 19:10 · follows Andy Robertson

Rostrum wrote:

How does Severian quickly unsheath his sword when it's slung behind his back? I'm imagining it being long enough that he can't simply reach back and pull it out (his arm not being long enough to get it all the way out of the sheath). And if its length is comparable to the span of Severian's arms, I'm not sure how he gets it out at all. Am I wrongly imagining Terminus Est as much longer than it really is?

Does he ever actually "draw it" from that position on his back? (Offhand I don't recall a case, but I could be forgetting something.) My sense of him unsheathing it when it is in front of him is that he is pulling the sheath in the opposite direction as he moves the sword: a two-hand operation, though once it is begun the sheath can be flicked off by swinging the partially sheathed sword.

=mantis=

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