

Fate, undines and Autarc

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 29 Jan 1998

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Tony Ellis — 29 Jan 1998, 10:13

29/01/98

09:37

RE>Fate, undines and Autarchs

CRCulver (et al):

The undines did not bring their own destruction, they survived the coming of the New Sun and Urth's transformation into Ushas, as Mr. Driussi explains. However, I wonder why the undine would have saved him if it led to the destruction of Erebus, who was an ally of Abaia.

Don't forget that TBOTNS is set in a universe of multiple possible futures. In some futures, no doubt, saving Severian leads to him becoming Autarch and satrap of Erebus, in others it just leads to him failing further down the line - remember the chilly future seen from Master Ash's tower? Saving him is a gamble, and it just happens that in the time-strand the novels follow it's a gamble that fails.

Having said that, I'm not sure that it's correct even to say that saving Severian "led to the destruction of Erebus". Erebus lives under the sea just like the undines, so presumably he survives too.

Is the copy of the BOTNS which is given to Thecla in her cell Severian's first manuscript, or a copy? (I don't know if we have a definite answer to this).

Personally I'm still reeling from the bombshell that Thecla is able to order the "lost" BOTNS from her local library in the first place. I think it must be not only a copy, but a major rewrite of the manuscript Severian pens. How else could he fail to recognise the New Sun as himself, or walk blindly into the various dangers he encounters, if he's read the narrative we have?

I would be interested to know just how many versions of the BOTNS are actually out there, and how they differ. Any educated guesses?

Kieran Cleary — 29 Jan 1998, 14:55 · follows Tony Ellis

I would be interested to know just how many versions of the BOTNS are actually out there, and how they differ.

I would imagine that the version that Thecla & Sev read is similar to the one Dr. Talos claims to have based his play on. That is, a colourful, mythic reworking of the "facts", which are more likely to be found in the Brown Book, purporting as it does to contain accounts of the original historical events upon which the mythological corpus of the time was based. I seem to remember Severian commenting that Thecla & himself were about to commence reading the section on the Conciliator in the Brown Book, but never get around to it. Now *that* could possibly have contained a closer approximation of the events as they happen in our BotNS.

In any case, coming as it did from Ultan's library, which appears to extend in space and time beyond the boundaries of the citadel, it is perhaps not unreasonable to allow the possibility that the version of tBotNS which Thecla gets from the library relates an account from a parallel Urth, but one in which the New Sun also appears (Eata as New Sun? not sure of the spelling: Severian's old apprentice friend who he meets again in Citadel & features in his musings on alternative workings out of the story).

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