

Shadows

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 18 Apr 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3165>

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Roy C. Lackey — 18 Apr 2002, 06:52

I just finished re-reading the SS series.

I don't know if it has been pointed out before, but at the end of the SS series, just as Silkhorn is about to finally admit that he is Silk, the shadow imagery that lends the first volume of the NS series its title is inverted. The Shadow of the Torturer, we know, falls on the victim as the executioner stands between him and the sun. As Silkhorn lifts the Chrasmologic Writings to read the passage Remora had marked, the opposite occurs:

"The open book lay in his lap. He grasped it with both hands and raised it until his shadow no longer fell upon the print."

Two pages earlier, as Silkhorn waited for Remora to fetch the book, he must have had some presentiment of what was about to happen. He was speaking to Oreb (who was the only witness to record his words, but I guess we aren't supposed to notice that):

"I am a prisoner in a cell," he told Oreb, "and that tall man in black will return with my death warrant. I know it, and can't do a thing about it. Tell Nettle I loved her, please. Will you do that?"

Notice the past tense, "loved". The imagery he uses reminds us of Severian's guild, but the "tall man in black" he is speaking of is Remora in his augur's robe. It is Horn who is speaking here, who is about to die so that Silk can be reborn. When Silkhorn lifts the book which contains the words that will free Silk's spirit, he brings it out of the shadow of his own body into the light of the sun. Horn dies, Silk is reborn.

That is what Silk meant in the Afterword: "--in a sense, I have killed their father, though the Outsider surely knows that I never meant him the least harm."

Talk about writing coming full circle!

-Roy