

Sev's Deaths

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 09 Jul 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4072>

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James Jordan — 09 Jul 2003, 02:23

The thought that each time Sev dies he leaves an old body behind is a new one for me, but it seems to be in the text.

Has anyone made a list of all the deaths of Sev, and investigated clues for all the leftover bodies?

Nutria

Michael Andre-Driussi — 09 Jul 2003, 14:28 · follows James Jordan

Nutria wrote:

The thought that each time Sev dies he leaves an old body behind is a new one for me, but it seems to be in the text.

Has anyone made a list of all the deaths of Sev, and investigated clues for all the leftover bodies?

Yes, I covered this in "Additions, Errata, &cetera" volumes 2 and 3.

There is definitely a body for "sailor Severian" on the ship Tzadkiel, and one for Apu-Punchau in the Age of Myth. Apu-Punchau is clearly independent once the "narrative Severian" has moved on. Based on this, there might well be an independent Conciliator who miraculously "survives" the blast at Mount Typhon at about that point where "narrative Severian" takes to the corridors of Time . . . this becomes boggling because, just like the post-narrative Apu-Punchau, it means that we do not have all of their lives and acts as direct witness -- they both go off and do other things, which Severian doesn't know about. As I've called them before, they are "slivers," or maybe "sheddings" would be better.

About the "first Severian" mentioned by Severian himself. Maybe everybody should look at the text itself, in chapter 38 of CITADEL.

The first Severian:

- 1) Did not drown.
- 2) Was raised by torturers.
- 3) Was sent to Thrax.
- 4) Did not have the Claw.
- 5) Fled Thrax.
- 6) Encountered the autarch.
- 7) Became the new autarch.
- 8) Sailed to Yesod.
- 9) Was not returned to his own time, so that ultimately he became Apu Punchau in the Age of Myth and the anonymous armiger/exultant of the mausoleum (some time in the early Age of the Autarch).

This means, I think, that the first Severian ("ProtoS" or "Severian the Cruel") had no Thecla (at the very least, not an indwelling Thecla) and no Dorcas.

As for possible resurrections (taken from AE&2):

- 1) Drowned in river
- 2) Triskele
- 3) Fiacre crash, Severian and Agia
- 4) Dorcas
- 5) Sanguinary Field
- 6) Thecla within Severian
- 7) Typhon
- 8) Miles
- 9) Severian killed on battlefield
- 10) Mandragora
- 11) Severian killed by winged thing on Ship
- 12) Zama
- 13) Severian killed as Conciliator
- 14) Severian drowned at deluge
- 15) Severian killed as Apu Punchau

=mantis=

Josh Geller — 09 Jul 2003, 15:38 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

On Wed, 2003-07-09 at 07:28, Michael Andre-Driussi wrote:

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Bifurcations.

This is all correct, as near as I can tell.

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Andrew Bollen — 10 Jul 2003, 02:24 · follows Josh Geller

From mantis:

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Maybe this ties in tangentially with something that bugged me about the end of RTTW, the meetings between Silkhorn and young Sev. On the surface, these meetings are quite unsatisfactory. Why do they meet at all? Sev tells Silkhorn about the powers in the water of Urth, leads him to Scylla's tomb; shows him his dog, gives Silkhorn some stump-care tips ... It all seems rather ad-hoc.

I think there should be a parallel between these meetings, and New Sun Sev's meeting with young Ymar. I read the latter as quite epochal. Sev (we can infer, without stretching too far) inspires Ymar with the vision of higher things, the sun renewed, Ymar's own future ascendancy etc and so probably causes Ymar to do things which lead to him founding the line of Autarchs, leading eventually to Sev himself. Sev is at least a "completion" of Ymar, the terminus in a series which started with Ymar's Alpha, and which Sev himself initiated through his acts and prophecies.

(Sev the minor-god is his own prime mover in many things - by fulfilling the legend of the Conciliator and the New Sun, he creates it; by becoming the New Sun he initiates the line of Autarchs with their transcendental mission to bring the New Sun, himself. He perhaps causes himself to be saved by Juturna in his youth - undines are not bound by time, and I think you have to assume that her meeting with Sev at the end takes place before Sev's near-drowning, from her point of view.)

I want to find something similar in young-Sev/Silkhorn. It may be that a crucial difference between "Sev the Cruel" and "our Sev" is embodied in and caused by his compassionate destruction of Thecla. This prefigures his compassionate destruction of Urth as the New Sun, and it is an act of Love which maybe "Sev the Cruel" was incapable of, and thus incapable of bringing the New Sun.

Perhaps it's not too much of a stretch to see Silkhorn's influence as the cause of this difference. Part of Silk's charisma is to bring out the best in everybody he meets, where any good exists at all: he is pretty much an avatar of the proposition that the only divinity is Love.

So that's one parallel I am comfortable with. But more broadly, I would like to see Silkhorn as the self-caused "completion" of Sev in the same way that Sev is the completion of Ymar.

In some partial ways that seems straightforward. Silkhorn has a pretty direct line to the Increate, receiving inspiration & standing in His presence on occasions, while Sev only gets to meet the local managers. Silkhorn is wiser, holier, at least as efficacious in worldly things, possesses magical powers not reliant on hokey cosmic power sources, is even more irresistible to female entities of various species, etc etc etc. He is a great charismatic leader, bringing out the best in just about everybody, while just about everybody who gets close to Sev leaves him, or is left, or dies. Silkhorn sets Blue & Green on the path of righteousness, and these worlds will avoid the fate of old Urth (at least that's the way I read it), whereas Sev doesn't have that kind of juice - his function is more to rather crudely destroy hopelessly bad things to make way for the good (the Urth, the prison governess etc).

But it doesn't get me to the point where Silkhorn is a self-caused "completion" of Sev, and I

don't see any way to get there without going quite a long way beyond the text: perhaps there was some cloning jiggery-pokery going on, perhaps a Sev-sliver did something to "cause" Silkhorn somewhere in time, perhaps Silkhorn is somehow Ymar come again to close the circle. Maybe, but I don't see anything in the text to support any of these scenarios.

I'd abandon this tack, except for GW's statement somewhere to the effect that Silk (and only Silk, on The Whorl), in the broadest sense, is a member of the torturer's guild. I can only see two ways of reading that: either Silk is (a clone of) Ymar, or a Sev, or perhaps some other torturer; or some part of Silk dwells in Sev after their meeting.