

What becomes of THE WONDERS OF URTH AND SKY

The Urth list — 10 messages, 8 voices, 07 Aug 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4150>

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Don Palumbo — 07 Aug 2003, 17:46

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An easy question, but can anyone remember what finally becomes of THE BOOK OF THE WONDERS OF URTH AND SKY in the Book of the New Sun? Does Severian still have it by the time he returns to Nessus as Autarch, or does he lose it sometime after he reads the "Tale of a Boy Called Frog" to little Severian, perhaps around Lake Diuturna, where both Terminus Est and the Claw are destroyed?

--Don Palumbo</html>

William Ansley — 07 Aug 2003, 15:52 · follows Don Palumbo

At 10:46 AM 8/7/2003 -0700, you wrote:

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Don,

I don't remember.

However, with Wolfe, especially on this discussion list, there may be easy questions, but there are no easy answers. <G>

Michael Andre-Driussi — 07 Aug 2003, 16:41 · follows William Ansley

Don Palumbo wrote:

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to little Severian, perhaps around Lake Diuturna, where both *Terminus Est* and the Claw are destroyed?

Citadel, chapter 34: Severian still has it when he returns to the Citadel; he intends to keep it, and hopes that the sight of him carrying it will inspire more reading.

=mantis=

teflon93 — 07 Aug 2003, 19:09 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

The larger question is why Severian needs a book at all when he's got a photographic memory. One reading should be sufficient.

Teflon93

From: Michael Andre-Driussi <mantis at siriusfiction.com>
Date: 2003/08/07 Thu PM 12:41:59 EDT
To: urth at urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) What becomes of THE WONDERS OF URTH AND SKY

Don Palumbo wrote:

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Chris — 07 Aug 2003, 19:42 · follows teflon93

I believe that Severian says enough to indicate that he feels much the way Wolfe does on the subject of books, and it's a feeling I share. The idea of keeping a special book that you already know by heart doesn't seem strange to me. Opening the physical book and re-reading the pages, no matter how well you remember them, is a pleasure rather than a practical concern.

Civet

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Date: 2003/08/07 Thu PM 12:41:59 EDT
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Don Palumbo wrote:

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Andrew Bollen — 07 Aug 2003, 22:20 · follows Chris

I know there was some discussion of this, sometime, but I can't find it on a quick search. Sev fetches four books for Thecla - Wonders, a book of devotions, something to do with heraldry, and another one. Hope I've got that right - anyway, I recall that three of the books were described in at least some detail, but one wasn't, which in Wolfe world usually means we're supposed to ask questions about it. Thoughts?

Ashley Crill — 08 Aug 2003, 05:46 · follows Andrew Bollen

Severian mentions at one point in Claw that he has never read the entire book. Perhaps he never finishes the thing during his journey.

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

From: teflon93 at cox.net [mailto:teflon93 at cox.net]

Sent: Thu 8/7/2003 2:09 PM

To: urth at urth.net

Cc:

Subject: Re: Re: (urth) What becomes of THE WONDERS OF URTH AND SKY

The larger question is why Severian needs a book at all when he's got a photographic memory. One reading should be sufficient.

Mooncalf — 08 Aug 2003, 07:28 · follows Ashley Crill

Ashley Crill pointed out (regarding why Sev needs to retain a book after he [apparently] read it):

Severian mentions at one point in Claw that he has never read the entire book. Perhaps he never finishes the thing during his journey.

Good point. Also Severian mentions that while he never forgets anything he doesn't always have instant recall. Therefore it might be faster (and easier) for him to go back to the original source rather than trying to search through his memory in order to bring up a particular passage.

It's all a crock though in my opinion. At least in regards to him having a perfect memory. Perhaps he is trying to deceive us or just himself. Who knows. But of course no one can truly claim with any certainty to having such a memory. Not unless somehow everything in one's life has been recorded and can therefore be played back in order to determine the accuracy of that claim. Otherwise how would you know? I mean even if you could remember verbatim what you read in some book and can verify it by going back to that book and checking...still, that doesn't mean that your other memories will also be 100% accurate (i.e., you might have a better memory for what you read as opposed to what you heard or what you saw...or you might even unconsciously replace certain true memories, for whatever reason, with false ones).

Then again does he ever say he has a perfect memory or just that he never forgets?* If only the latter then maybe he means it not so much in that he has a photographic type of memory but rather that he can simply recall, say, what he had for lunch five years, three months, and two

days ago (roast beef and peas) on a very uneventful day. Perhaps not how many peas there were or how many bites it took to finish the roast beef, but rather just that he didn't forget about having had that meal and what it generally consisted of. To most of us, i'd wager, we'd consider that amazing and that therefore he was well justified, at least in some sense, in claiming he never forgets. Especially since most of us can't recall what we had during an ordinary lunch on an ordinary day a mere 20 days ago (or even whether we had lunch that day or not, if we're prone to skipping them once in a while). Memories like that are soon "lost in the mist" for us but maybe they're still there for Severian, though maybe not down to the very last detail. That would explain his lapses at times and also why he might feel the need to carry books around with him that he's already read.

Mooncalf

*lol, i was just thinking how great it'd be if someone on this list had a perfect memory and we could turn to that person with our many inquiries of this sort

Don Palumbo — 08 Aug 2003, 16:40 · follows Mooncalf

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Mantis,

Thanks!

--Don Palumbo

At 09:41 AM 8/7/03 -0700, you wrote:

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send "unsubscribe" to urth-request at urth.net
</blockquote></x-html> </html>

Don Palumbo — 08 Aug 2003, 16:47 · follows Don Palumbo

Teflon93

Obviously, he hasn't found the time to read it all yet, at that point.

--Don Palumbo

At 03:09 PM 8/7/03 -0400, you wrote:

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