

Jonas and Hethor

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 20 Mar 1998

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Tony Ellis — 20 Mar 1998, 08:58

18/03/98

14:13

RE>Jonas and Hethor

Right. When I sent this on the 18th it apparently vanished into the ether, so I'm re-sending. If it appears twice apologies to the list, and especially to Mantis, who doesn't deserve to be harangued twice.

The original e-mail began with my wondering why Mantis felt he had to be so ungracious in answering my questions, but I'll cut to the action this time. If my tone seems a tad starchy in places, please refer to his piece Jonas and Hethor": <g>

<snip>

Is it understood that certain prisoners are n-th generation ship crew? Is this unclear?

"Certain" prisoners may be n-th generation ship crew, for sure, but you said "the prisoners", and the only two you seemed to be excluding were Lomer and Nicarete. This was the assertion I was asking you to qualify - and that was all I was asking you to do.

The death of "the navigator," (II, ch. 16)

One navigator doth not a antechamber full of descendants make. The mere fact that Lomer, Jonas and Severian are "ordinary" prisoners tells us that ordinary prisoners are still put in here, and Nicarete speaks of "all those who have been here so long that they have forgotten their crimes", which implies a significant body of prisoners who have committed a crime _in their own lifetime_ to be here. They can't be ship crew descendants either.

I can see now why you think that this crew crashed on or near the House Absolute, and it makes sense to me, but we're told that the prison probably predates the reign of Ymar: surely back then there were still ports? In which case any ship can't have crashed until after the antechamber had been established, in which case... Just a thought.

(How many old men poling on the Lake of Birds? You don't suppose that was the =3Dsame=3D old man on hand after Severian's near drowning [I, ch. 2], asking about seeing a woman underwater?)

Sorry if I'm being dim, but I'm not quite sure what you're saying here. If you're saying that the old man poling on the Lake _was_ the same as the one asking about seeing a woman underwater you're certainly wrong (the first is Docas's husband, the second is just possibly the old boatman we meet again at the end of TCOTA. Am I being obscure? Now you see why we

sometimes want qualifying arguments <g>).

Is it understood that Hethor is being very crafty in keeping Jonas from seeing him, even when the two characters are seemingly in the same scene? For instance, at the Wall of Nessus.

Yes, we know about this because Severian tells us plainly. It only tells us that J&H _may_ have served on the same ship at some point, and if they have, so what? How does this prove that Hethor is Kim Lee Soong?

Is it understood that Hethor has spent time on starship Tzadkiel?

I ask again, how does this prove that Hethor is KLS?

Is it understood...

...That the most likely source of Hethor's magic mirrors is that he stole them from Yesod, making him a sort of Prometheus?

Nope, as I understand it we don't know where he got them from. But if they did come from Yesod this still, _still_, wouldn't help the KLS theory.

Is there any real doubt that "Fortunate Cloud" and "Quasar" are different translations of the same anciently named ship?

Uh, yes. Every doubt. A quasar is a compact, star-like source of radiation. It is _nothing_ like a cloud. If Wolfe had called Hethor's ship the "Nebula" you might have a point - but he didn't.

Is it understood that Hethor's real name is "a much older one, that hardly anyone has heard of now" (III, ch. 16)?

So Hethor hails from Urth's deep past. Nobody is disputing that. Given his profession it's practically a given. But that doesn't make his name Kim Lee Soong. It could be almost anything.

You suggest that KLS is the only name that Severian has never heard before, but we really don't know that because nobody else ever _asks_ him if he's heard a particular name before, as Jonas does. We do learn that Jonas is a name Severian hadn't heard before, so maybe Hethor's real name is Jonas? :-)

Re: the Shepherd of Jonas. Rather than argue, let me turn the tables

Well, if you want to, Mantis. But you'll forgive us if we assume that you won't argue because you _can't_ argue.

But nah, I can go to all this effort and more, with the same results. You won't believe my reading and I'm not interested in forcing you or anybody else to believe my reading.

"You can't fire me, I quit!"

Nobody is accusing you of forcing us to believe your reading, Mantis. And it's unreasonable of you to declare that I simply won't believe it anyway, when I've been happy enough on several occasions in the past to agree that you were right and I was wrong.

If this isn't going to be one of those occasions, it's because it seems to me that very few of your arguments have anything to do with the assertions I was querying, as I hope I've shown above.

Michael Straight — 20 Mar 1998, 08:33 · follows Tony Ellis

On 20 Mar 1998, Tony Ellis wrote (quoting mantis):

Is there any real doubt that "Fortunate Cloud" and "Quasar" are different translations of the same anciently named ship?

Uh, yes. Every doubt. A quasar is a compact, star-like source of radiation. It is _nothing_ like a cloud. If Wolfe had called Hethor's

ship the "Nebula" you might have a point - but he didn't.

Been a while since I was familiar with theories of how stars form, but isn't a star (and thus a quasar) a gas cloud that is "fortunate" enough to condense into a star?

-Rostrum