

Rudesind of the Apes and Shapes(hifting)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 27 May 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4628>

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b sharp — 27 May 2006, 15:25

Roy and Mournings glory write:

R:

I wrote: >I see no evidence of shape-shifting in NEW SUN,

I take that back; Tzadkiel could do it.

M:

So, too, I believe, could his son, Venant -- unless you're going to argue he naturally looks like the very human, if false, Epitome of Urth.

Severian calls Venant a hierarch just as he does Apheta. The larvae of a Hierogrammate seem to be of human form (if you ignore a stump tongue and bioluminescent sexual arousal). The false Epitome of Urth was Zak/Tzadkiel I think.

Regarding evidence of shape-shifting, did we really see any for Tzadkiel? We saw various creatures and people of different shapes which Severian tied together in his mind from circumstantial evidence including conversations with the people. He/we never saw any shape shifting. We did directly see Tzadkiel's finger become a smaller version of her but that is really size-shifting isn't it? She kept the same shape.

I'm not really trying to outdo Roy in Royness but rather make a point about evidence. There is evidence for shapeshifting in BotNS though most of it is legendary. Let's say Earth (not urth) was a storybook. In that book we find legends of dragons, pegasus, hobbits and King Arthur. Should we dismiss them as legends? Or should we search through the past, digging through dirt and historical records? We might find dinosaurs and Homo erectus and the Pendragon family.

And we might not find Pegasus. Should we keep digging? Some mystic/mythic minded people might say yes. Science-minded people would look at the scientific evidence (Eohippus through Equus, bird wing physiology) and say no. We all build mosaic pictures of the world and some pieces fit and some don't. Naturally, we reject those that don't fit unless we are willing to radically change our mosaic picture.

Now, as Urth archaeologists, we can't physically dig and sift its dirt (polychrome sand) but we can dig and sift through the confusing text. We can't read alternate Urth history books (except perhaps 5th Head), but we can read Earth legends and history which clearly inspired BotNS and hope to glean more tiles for our mosaic picture.

Unlike Earth (as far as we know), Urth is a place where time travel occurs. For this reason, shadows from the past AND the future can create legends. It also means that the source of legends, past and future, can appear right in front of Urth residents.

So, when Roy says "I see no evidence of shape-shifting in NEW SUN," is he saying Urth legends

are not evidence? Or that shape-shifting is a pegasus, a piece which does not fit his mental picture?

-bsharp