

Dr. Talos

The Urth list — 5 messages, 5 voices, 06 Sep 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4713>

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b sharp — 06 Sep 2006, 18:35

Dan'I says:

Occurs to me: are Vodalus and the Doctor the only people in the Book with cane-swords? And >does this imply a connection I'm not seeing?

A cane-sword seems like a unique enough item to merit some sort of connection but I don't see it either. Talos acquires his gold headed cane as a "dropsie" after one of Baldanders' scary rampages during the play. A nervous exultant in the audience? Hard to believe it is Vodalus.

Also, Talos loves whacking the heads off flowers with his cane. What's up with that? And what's up with him in general? A homunculus? Name from a mythical bronze man? Hot dry skin. No sex, sleep or food needed? He seems to understand Urth to Ushas better than anyone else. How does he know about the woman on the Path of Air? Why do F, B and O befuddle and anger him? Is he (as I see the 5 coffin mausoleum) a literary insertion (fun with Frankenstein) not an integral part of the plot? Anyone have any insight here?

-bsharp

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 06 Sep 2006, 18:55 · in reply to b sharp

On 9/6/06, b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com> wrote:

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No, I don't think it's hard at all -- we know that Vodalus's people have been watching Severian and the krew; we know that Vodalus visits the city occasionally. As a spot check, we can look when we get to the appropriate part of Book II and see if there's any mention of Vodalus's swordcane, but I'll bet there isn't.

Also, Talos loves whacking the heads off flowers with his cane.
What's up with that?

Channeling Seinfeld, B? 8*)

We know that flowers in general are significant in the Book, and that roses in particular signify the Conciliator. And Talos works for (& was created by) someone who opposes the return of the Conciliator/New Sun. H'mmm.

And what's up with him in general? A homunculus? Name from a mythical bronze man? Hot dry skin. No sex, sleep or food needed?

"Very little" food or sleep; it's certainly possible that this is a code for "none," but then we have to ask what his energy source is. He clearly doesn't burn fossil fuels! But "hot dry skin" implies to me that perhaps he does use some heat-producing power plant. A mininuke perhaps?

He seems to understand Urth to Ushas better than anyone else.

Including (interestingly enough) Baldanders. He has surpassed his maker in some significant ways; this might itself be something of a "theme" in tBotNS, given the history of the Hiero-foos. But when he deliberately evokes Frankenstein, I'm forcefully reminded of the most chilling line in Shelley's book: "You are my creator, but I am your master. Obey!"

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I've got a piece of braaaaaain lodge in me heeead!!!

Adam Thornton — 06 Sep 2006, 23:51 · in reply to b sharp

On Sep 6, 2006, at 11:35 AM, b sharp wrote:

Also, Talos loves whacking the heads off flowers with his cane.

What's up
with that?

I see that as the Frankenstein flower-picking reference.

And what's up with him in general? A homunculus? Name from a mythical bronze man? Hot dry skin. No sex, sleep or food needed?

All of these: Onomastics works quite well here. Talos is an automaton, a creation of Baldanders: "face like a stuffed fox"--think of him as a *very* sophisticated alarm clock. Although he eventually acquires a measure of independence.

Adam

Russell Wodell — 07 Sep 2006, 02:42 · in reply to Adam Thornton

I have always seen Dr. Talos as the fox in Disney's Pinocchio: "Hi-diddlee-dee, an actor's life for me!" And Severian dreams of being a puppet, not a real boy...

Russell Wodell

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

From: "Adam Thornton" <adam at io.com>

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Sent: Wednesday, September 06, 2006 4:51 PM

Subject: Re: (urth) Dr. Talos

On Sep 6, 2006, at 11:35 AM, b sharp wrote:

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Adam

Bruce Hayles — 10 Sep 2006, 16:49 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Baldanders created Dr. Talos to be everything he is not. 'Baldanders wisely made me all that he is not, so that I might counterweight his deficiencies. I am not fond of money, for example. That's an excellent thing for the patient, in a personal physician. And I am loyal to my friends, because he is first of them.' (pg 181 in *Sword & Citadel*) Baldanders is a scientist and a creator; perhaps Dr. Talos is an artist and a destroyer. Dr. Talos puts on plays but always interrupts their performance; he creates Jolenta, but in the end destroys her. When he kills flowers, I see that as idle destruction. I think it unlikely that Dr. Talos is now the "master" of Baldanders. Baldanders needs the beatings to wake him up--otherwise he would sleep too long. Baldanders created the physician to maintain his growth and keep himself in check: he expected that his doctor would have to order him around.

On 9/6/06, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

On 9/6/06, b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com> wrote:

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