

the garden of sleep and a couple of other things

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 17 May 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5606>

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Cliff Judge — 17 May 2010, 15:58

When Severian is nearly drowned by the nenuphars, his description of the events show that he was confused about which direction is up and which is down. This is something that I have read people who are nearly drowned describe. I believe it was something like, he felt like he was pushed up, and then pulled down....when really what must have happened is the undine who freed him pulled him down, to get him under the mats of nenuphar, and then pushed him up to the surface.

In the garden of sleep he reaches down to retrieve Terminus Est and one hand gives it to him, then another grasps his other hand and pulls him down. Then the chapter breaks and he is being helped UP onto the path by Dorcas.

While in the boat with Hildegriinn later, he sees a manatee - an Undine - under the water. So what I think happened is, the Undine handed him his sword, and then Dorcas pulled him up.

Cas = Dorcas?

Also, for reasons I shall spare you all from, I have embarked on a do-it-yourself fence repair project in my yard. As I entered my second hour of trying to free this lump of badly-poured concrete from the earth in my backyard, for the twelfth time the writing on Hildegriinn's card flashed through my head. Why, oh why, could I not call upon his services?

Moving along...did Agia really stash the Claw in Severian's sabretache when they initially wrecked the Pelegrines' altar, and then tried to pickpocket it in Agilus's cell? Or did she plant it on him during the encounter in the cell? We had already established that the Claw goes where it will at that point in the story, perhaps it compelled Agia to hand it to Severian. And we had also established that Agia was, as some women I have known, bat-shit insane. I think it might be interesting to see her as an unwitting tool of divine will, instead of an independent actor or random element.

Another thing I find interesting about Agilus and Agia's plot to kill Sev was that it was apparently motivated by a lust for his sword? On the surface level, sure, that's basically a complex form of banditry - they run this shop, when they see people with nice things they pretend to be a Septention and issue a challenge to a duel with Avern's, which most people who don't live in those quarters will, no doubt, be quite unprofficient with. But on a deeper level, you've got two lower-class people who are willing to kill for Severian's sword, which is his symbol of office, an emblem of his station in the ancient power structure of the world.

Also...I was at this exhibition of sword-related martial arts the other week (Swordfest 2010) and saw a demo by a guy who is trying to reconstruct Bolognese dueling techniques from some old manuscripts. There was some interesting explanations of what Bolognese dueling was about in the 1600s. Apparently if the courts were unable to come to a verdict in a suit between gentlemen, they'd order them to duel, to basically leave the matter up to God and whoever had

greater skill. The DEFENDANT was the one who chose the weapons used - anything from a small rapier to a halberd to a gigantic greatsword called a "spidoon". And the plaintiff had to make the initial attack - which generally speaking puts him at a disadvantage. At any rate, allowing the challenger to choose weapons seems to be an unfair type of judicial dueling.

Severian was distracted by the sight of the two Avern leaves engaging in a mid-flight duel, and Agilus put another leaf in his chest. Then, as he was coming back to life, he describes a reassuring presence pressing on his back, spine-to-spine. Now that I've read the whole three series once, that's got to be the presence of God he feels. Any thoughts as to why he feels God is back-to-back with him?