

Palaemon's exile

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 08 May 1998

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Charles Dye — 08 May 1998, 13:25

Dan Parmenter <dan at lec.com> writes:

[snip] Remember, the scene that I cited was of Winnoc (the Pelerine slave) recounting being whipped by Palaemon. [bobbitt]

Incidentally, Palaemon's behavior and words when he sends Severian on his way are very odd. First he claims that Thrax is by the sea. Then he tells Severian to pay attention to his good advice but remarks that Severian would probably forget it all. Palaemon, who we are told elsewhere was fond of Severian for his perfect memory.

I don't find the first error odd at all. Palaemon, who is sending Severian into exile, is naturally reminded of his own exile. Severian is heading upriver, but old Palaemon is confusing it with his own journey downriver to the coast. Winnoc, you recall, was "planning to sign aboard a certain ship" when he got an offer from the Pelerines. Winnoc was still in his hometown, where Palaemon presumably beat him, since he made a side trip to visit his mother before leaving.

Palaemon also gets in a sly evasion in this chapter. He states that guild members have been dispatched before, "though whether those were such cases as this the chronicles do not say." He doesn't tell Severian that he doesn't know; he just reports what "the chronicles" have to say!

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