

Speaking of Art...

The Urth list — 13 messages, 7 voices, 04 Jan 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5869>

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Jeff Wilson — 04 Jan 2011, 09:05

...Santa brought me back issues of the SHADOW comic book, as discussed recently. Indeed, Gene Wolfe is credited with Script Supervision and the script is true to the book modulo the adaptaion to comics, and it's fun to see the artists' different takes on the characters, the architecture, and especially the animals, but I don't think it can be taken as anything revelatory of the original work, due to the very poor quality of most of the anatomy and similar lack of attention to detail.

Perhaps most egregious is that Severian (who is drawn to greatly resemble Gaiman's Dream) is drawn to be *taller* than Ultan!

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >

Son of Witz — 04 Jan 2011, 17:46 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Don't get me started.

I think the artist was gave it an honest, earnest attempt. Economics likely affected the renderings. A lot is very sketchy. Naifeh's style has evolved into something very different now. The atrocious coloring job more or less hammers any subtlety out of Naifeh's lines though.

Such a huge job for someone to take on, there are so many diferent aspects to consider, like heights, as you point out.

Take a simple idea like Illustrating the citadel. What should the towers look like? How many towers? Sometimes the spaceport/citadel seems like most of the towers are launched and a small portion of towers remain. Yet at other points Severian mentions the "thousand towers" of the citadel. Then, are these rockets like ours, which are mostly fuel with a compartment tip, or do they contain the antigravity stuff the landers have, which would make most of the towers height cargo and quarters, not fuel? So how much renovation? Are the first several levels a tank with floors and rooms and stairwells added, or were there already usable live/work structures within that we repurposed? Then, was the citadel an organized effort where there are a limited number of possible designs, or was it an ad-hoc collection of whatever rockets someone could afford? Are there baroque exultant family rockets with ostentatious flourishes, or was everything built by Halliburton?

This is why, though I have two years of sketches and designs trying to flesh out concept art for Urth, most of it still needs so much work. These questions start coming up in the middle of drawing.

~Witz

On Jan 4, 2011, at 1:05 AM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

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Lane Haygood — 04 Jan 2011, 17:52 · in reply to Son of Witz

I always envisioned the Citadel as a real 1980s-ish version of "rockets," e.g., not the sleek futurist curves of the 50s and 60s, but rather blocky, industrial, girder-laced monstrosities like you'd see in Cameron's "Aliens." Severian's Citadel would be like a hollowed-out inner city, fractured skyscrapers clawing at the blood-red sky, with a lot of rust and decay around a sluggish-moving green river choked with weeds and trash. The "new" parts of the citadel, e.g., those buildings built after Typhon's time, would all be stone and more akin to what we would see in a late medieval city or town.

But that's the impression I had, and I can't say it's textually supported or anything. Just the vision I get in my head.

LH

On Tue, Jan 4, 2011 at 11:46 AM, Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:
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Lee Berman — 04 Jan 2011, 17:58 · follows Lane Haygood

Son o' Witz: Take a simple idea like Illustrating the citadel. What should the towers look like? How many towers?

An indeterminate number. Like drawing Neighbors or Shadow Children. Just make sure some of the towers extend to
Green :-).

Son of Witz — 04 Jan 2011, 18:10 · in reply to Lane Haygood

Yes, lane, that is mostly in line with my mental image.

But then, consider two details. At one point Sev tells us the rockets have "swelling sides" and that no one could climb down their smooth surface to escape. This sounds so much like the gleaming rockets of 50's SF. But try drawing that. It looks pretty hokey, unless perhaps you nail the exact type of rendering to contextualize it as a pulp cover.

At a point, an artist needs to divert from the text. I have been unable to draw a torturers mask with a chin that I like one bit. Somehow, for me, the whole mouth and jaw need to be shown for aesthetic reasons.

Oh my god, I could FILL this list up with these concerns, they've been so much on my mind.

~witz

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Jerry Friedman — 04 Jan 2011, 18:34 · in reply to Son of Witz

From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

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aesthetic reasons.

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I know part of his mouth is supposed to be hidden, but does his chin have to be? If not, how about some variation of this shape?

http://www.myspace.com/albino_bullfrog/photos/13129598#%22ImageId%22%3A13129598

Jerry Friedman

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 04 Jan 2011, 18:37 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Aaaaargh. Now I will be tormented with the image of Severian as a luchadore.

On Tue, Jan 4, 2011 at 10:34 AM, Jerry Friedman
<jerry_friedman at yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

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Jerry Friedman

Son of Witz — 04 Jan 2011, 20:42 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Luchadore! Ahhhh!

Well, not bad really.

Cyriaca mentions his chin is covered, because she guesses he has a cleft chin, and Sev says she's wrong, and she says he is wrong. So whether he has a cleft chin or not is ambiguous, but it is covered, and she says she can see enough of his lips, implying that they are partially covered. One imagines slits.

Anyway, it may not be obvious until you actually try to draw Severian in garb, but with a fuligin cloak and fuligin pants and boots and mask, which should properly be rendered as pure black with no highlights (except possibly where the material is dirty or gilded, as in the master's ceremonial masks) leaves an artist with mostly a silhouette with bare chest, some bits of lip and flesh eyelids showing, but not much else. Plus it often looks like some fetish bondage superhero thing. All this goes away when I show chin and mouth. Suddenly there is a character whose emotions can be drawn to some degree. Luckily, Severian actually wears the mask very seldom in the story.

Of course, that begs the question as to why picture him, on the hardcover, like some angsty bondage hero? That is the Severian he grew OUT of and did his best to leave behind. Thematically, it's almost rude to frame his book with him in garb.

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Jerry Friedman

Lane Haygood — 04 Jan 2011, 20:46 · in reply to Son of Witz

It may just be me, but I always assumed Sev's mask was a black/fuligin hood like medieval executioners wore.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 4, 2011, at 2:42 PM, Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

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On 1/4/2011 12:34 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

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It may just be me, but I always assumed Sev's mask was a black/fuligin hood like medieval >executioners wore.

Luchadore! Ahhhh!

Incidentally, I have watched a part of a lucha libre bout, but I failed to recognize the style of mask. So I apologize to you and Dan'l and anyone else whose imagination I harmed.

Well, not bad really.>>Cyriaca mentions his chin is covered, because she guesses he has a cleft chin, and Sev says she's wrong, and she says he is wrong. So whether he has a cleft chin or not is ambiguous, but it is covered, and she says she can see enough of his lips, implying that they are partially covered.
One imagines slits.

One does. I'd forgotten that it covered his chin.

Anyway, it may not be obvious until you actually try to draw Severian in garb, but with a fuligin >>cloak and fuligin pants and boots and mask, which should properly be rendered as pure black >>with no highlights (except possibly where the material is dirty or gilded, as in the master's >>ceremonial masks) leaves an artist with mostly a silhouette with bare chest, some bits of lip and >>flesh eyelids showing, but not much else.

It wasn't obvious, but it did eventually occur to me. However, does this apply to Severian's leather clothes (boots, mask, probably baldric), or can they be just black? Not that that solves the problem.

Plus it often looks like some fetish bondage superhero thing.

Just "often"?

All this goes away when I show chin and mouth. Suddenly there is a character whose emotions >>can be drawn to some degree.

Interesting.

Luckily, Severian actually wears the mask very seldom in the story.

I suppose the bad news is that those are scenes you might like to depict--the avern duel, the executions at Saltus, the encounter with Cyriaca.

Of course, that begs the question as to why picture him, on the hardcover, like some angsty >>bondage hero? That is the Severian he grew OUT of and did his best to leave behind. >>Thematically, it's almost rude to frame his book with him in garb.

Well, it was the starting point of the whole thing, and way cooler than the Autarch's robes, I suspect.

Jerry Friedman

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From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

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Jerry Friedman

Jeff Wilson — 05 Jan 2011, 02:13 · in reply to Son of Witz

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He is pretty angsty over Thecla and then over little Sev, but I see what you mean. You might contrive to use close ups just of his shaded features, implying a look behind the mask; the IRON MAN films and most films with "buried alive" scenes take this approach despite the lack of realistic clearance to show such a view.

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aaron — 05 Jan 2011, 13:54 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Have any of you guys or girls ever seen a picture of Gene Wolfe as a young man? I have (saw a wedding photo on Google books a couple years back), and it seems to me that his description of Severian could've just as easily described himself as a young man. It would also be another case of Wolfe placing himself in one of his stories.

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