

Mandragora

The Urth list — 7 messages, 6 voices, 30 Nov 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6129>

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Brian — 30 Nov 2011, 14:20

Since we all agree Wikipedia is never wrong ;), I'll just stick with their definitions. Mandragora is the genus of the plant mandrake, which often has a somewhat man-shaped root. It is also the name of a type of demon. These demons are little dolls given to a sorceror by the Devil for the purpose of consulting "in time of need". They are thought to be related to the "[LINK: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fetishism>] fetish, which is nothing else than a dwelling-place made by a [LINK: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaman>] shaman or [LINK: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicine-man>] medicine-man for the reception of any wandering spirit who chooses to take up his abode therein."

Admittedly, Wikipedia has this last quote labeled as "citation needed", but this does sound remarkably like a spare body.

David Stockhoff — 30 Nov 2011, 15:14 · in reply to Brian

On 11/30/2011 9:20 AM, Brian wrote:

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Very nice. And again, this points me to BLS/BSS, and their multitude of riders and ridden. Regardless of how much detail Wolfe had worked out by the time he finished BNS, the concept plainly was fully developed even though BNS *seems* to have little possession going on.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 30 Nov 2011, 15:24 · in reply to Brian

Do you think the dolls that appear often in the dreams described by Wolfe are connected to mandragora?

Sergei Soloviev

Brian wrote:

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Larry Miller — 30 Nov 2011, 16:17 · in reply to Brian

Brian you beat me to it by posting that Wikipedia entry. That does sound like a spare body doesnt it.

On 11/30/11, Brian <brian@studiobl.com> wrote:
Since we all agree Wikipedia is never wrong ;), I'll just stick with their definitions. Mandragora is the genus of the plant mandrake, which often has a somewhat man-shaped root. It is also the name of a type of demon. These demons are little dolls given to a sorcerer by the Devil for the purpose of consulting "in time of need". They are thought to be related to the "[LINK: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fetishism>] fetish, which is nothing else than a dwelling-place made by a [LINK: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaman>] shaman or [LINK: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicine-man>] medicine-man for the reception of any wandering spirit who chooses to take up his abode therein."

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Gerry Quinn — 30 Nov 2011, 16:32 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff

On 11/30/2011 9:20 AM, Brian wrote:

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Except that Severian talked to the mandragora in question, and there was no indication of possession in the sense used elsewhere in the Sun series. One might postulate a hybrid spirit like Mani in Wizard Knight. But the homunculus itself claimed to be a deformed fetus, preserved

artificially in a semi-living state.

As for Typhon, I think he'd find a homunculus in a jar a bit confining. That is, if he weren't dead a couple of thousand years anyway.

- Gerry Quinn

Brian — 30 Nov 2011, 16:57 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

Ah, interesting...those dreams have confused the heck out of me. The whole Fava thing gets so weird I've never been able to get my head around it. I didn't think the mandragora was possessed, just a forgotten possible host. Typhon hedging his bets again.

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

From: Sergei SOLOVIEV

To: Brian , The Urth Mailing List

Subject: Re: (urth) Mandragora

Sent: 30 Nov '11 15:24

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Sergei Soloviev

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Jerry Friedman — 01 Dec 2011, 05:30 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

From: Gerry Quinn <gerry@bindweed.com>

...

But the
homunculus itself claimed to be a deformed fetus, preserved artificially in a
semi-living state.

Have I said this before? I feel certain that the homunculus is lying (or Severian imagines that it is). It pretends to agree that it's nothing of interest, and dead, as a reason for him to kill it.

Jerry Friedman