

The Secret of the Torturers

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 25 Nov 2012

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6311>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

the badger — 25 Nov 2012, 01:05

Early in Shadow, right after Severian is elevated to journeyman, Master Gurloes takes him aside and tells him the ultimate secret of their guild. We're not told what this is at the time but Severian does say he promised to never reveal it, and that he later broke this promise. Do we ever find out what the secret is?

Jeff Wilson — 25 Nov 2012, 01:27 · in reply to the badger

On 11/24/2012 7:05 PM, the badger wrote:

Early in Shadow, right after Severian is elevated to journeyman, Master Gurloes takes him aside and tells him the ultimate secret of their guild. We're not told what this is at the time but Severian does say he promised to never reveal it, and that he later broke this promise. Do we ever find out what the secret is?

2nd to last para of SWORD XXXI: "I had not thought, when I began this record of my life, to reveal any of the secrets of our guild that were imparted to me by Master Palaemon and Master Gurloes just before I was elevated, at the feast of Holy Katharine, to the rank of journeyman. But I will tell one now, because what I did that night on Lake Diuturna cannot be understood without understanding it. And the secret is only that we torturers obey. In all the lofty order of the body politic, the pyramid of lives that is immensely taller than any material tower, taller than the Bell Keep, taller than the Wall of Nessus, taller than Mount Typhon, the pyramid that stretches from the Autarch on the Phoenix Throne to the most humble clerk grubbing for the most dishonorable trader? a creature lower than the lowest beggar we are the only sound stone. No one truly obeys unless he will do the unthinkable in obedience; no one will do the unthinkable save we."

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

the badger — 25 Nov 2012, 01:35 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Thanks for this reference. Severian says this is "one of the secrets," meaning perhaps there are others. Obedience seems more like an all-pervasive theme or *raison d'etre* of the guild than a specific secret. For some reason I want to believe that there's something else, something esoteric related to Katherine the Weal, or the Autarch ...

On Nov 24, 2012, at 8:27 PM, "Jeff Wilson" <jwilson at clueland.com> wrote:

2nd to last para of SWORD XXXI: "I had not thought, when I began this record of my life, to reveal any of the secrets of our guild that were imparted to me by Master Palaemon and Master Gurloes just before I was elevated, at the feast of Holy Katharine, to the rank of journeyman. But I will tell one now, because what I did that night on Lake Diuturna cannot be understood without understanding it. And the secret is only that we torturers obey. In all the lofty order of the body politic, the pyramid of lives that is immensely taller than any material tower, taller than the Bell Keep, taller than the Wall of Nessus, taller than Mount Typhon, the pyramid that stretches from the Autarch on the Phoenix

Throne to the most humble clerk grubbing for the most dishonorable trader? a creature lower than the lowest beggar we are the only sound stone. No one truly obeys unless he will do the unthinkable in obedience; no one will do the unthinkable save we."

--

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at clueland.com

Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana

< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >
