

Big Booty

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 18 May 1998

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Dan Parmenter — 18 May 1998, 09:09

From: "Alice Turner" <al at interport.net>

Speaking of these major players, as mantis was doing if only en passant, it seems to me that Wolfe has left a distinctly loose thread in their regard. The New Sun, the great flood et al would seem to me to be just dandy for them. True they're lost most of their human allies, but they probably retain a proportional number of survivors. They have much more water to wallow about in. The undines are feeling feisty, as we actually see. It could be said that E, A & S have inherited Ushas. And that their interest in Severian was to that end. And that therefore he is a servant of evil, certainly an enemy of the Commonwealth, willingly or not. Any comment?

But the old Autarch tells us that they seek to enslave mankind. Not just those in boats, one assumes.

From: m.driussi at genie.com

I was going to write that if Vodalus knew with certainty that he was being supported by the autarch himself rather than a shadowy faction within the House Absolute, he would break the link. But I'm not so sure . . . Vodalus might be another patsy, another candidate for the throne being cultivated by the autarch, in the same way that Baldanders is being cultivated for the throne by O, B, & F. (For example, Thecla was not arrested by the autarch's order, but by some faction apparently a bit more concerned with stopping Vodalus.)

I'm inclined to think of Vodalus as a total patsy. His dialogue is filled with stock phrases like "that mewling fool, the Autarch" which seem too trite to be believed. He seems like a charismatic rebel figure, somewhat taken with himself, but really just another rich idler who might otherwise be torturing the prisoners in the antechamber, trysting in the Secret House and tripping on Alzabo in the woods on the weekends with his lowlife friends. He has about as much to do with real revolution as Mick Jagger.

BTW, it strikes me that Baldanders, for all of his mad science is just as capable of "not getting it" as Severian is. When the Hierodules bow down before Severian, Baldanders assumes that it is due to the fact that he will "win" the immediate conflict (the angry mob of Lake People vs. the Mad Scientist/Monster Baldanders). He's not thinking very globally, which is generally Severian's problem too.

D