

Meanwhile, back on Urth

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 12 Jun 1998

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Peter Westlake — 12 Jun 1998, 01:10

... Spectacled Bear is still re-reading the Book of the New Sun, having been saving 5HC for a time when he's wide enough awake to stand some chance of following it. In the process I noticed some details that bear on questions asked here earlier, including the one that so annoyed Alga: what were the footsteps in the cave of the man-apes? The first step "might have been the walking of a tower on the Final Day..." (Claw, VI). And then two books later, lo and behold, "... a machine that flashed fire, a machine that was like a tower walking." (Citadel, XXII). Then scarcely a page later, Mamillian's footstep remind Severian of "that I had once waked in the mine of the man-apes." (Citadel, XXIII). It's like a Martian war machine in the War of the Worlds!

Someone said that the sheath of Terminus Est changes from "manskin" to "leather", and was mystified. But manskin is a kind of leather, as evidenced by Claw, XXI, where Severian touches the Claw through its bag to resist Decuman's spell: the bag is referred to first as "human skin" then as "leather" in the same sentence. I think that the sheath is described as leather because we've already had the shock of learning what it's really made of, and we don't need to be distracted by it at places in the story where it doesn't matter, where the sheath is just where Severian keeps his sword.

There are still plenty of questions I still wonder about, but I'll wait till I get right to the end before asking them.

Peter.