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The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 11 Jun 1998

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Alice Turner — 11 Jun 1998, 23:56

Neal Smith writes:

desk? That's why I say colonists rather than explorers, who presumably have been trained in many skills. Or, if that won't wash, say that nearly everyone was killed except for a few folks as dumb as me. And that we then inbred and got kind of spacy, as I would imagine people do get under such circumstances (cf Australia, if you like--hi Damien!). This, it seems to me, would create at least a rope bridge between you and Borski.

...

Exactly. They devolved because of lack of ability to pass on acquired knowledge. Also (this is 1972), they're a bit New Agey to start with.

With respect to the idea that the abos are "spacey" or "New Agey", I think the addictive, (perhaps hallucinogenic?) drug that the shadow children are shown being addicted to in "A Story" would provide this.

Excellent, Neal! I haven't had time to reread the second 2/3 of 5HC and I'd forgotten that. Good witness for my side against you-know-who-you-are (and no, I don't have time tonight to take up your challenge, but I promise I'll make some at least by the weekend).

Four-Eyes:

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 footprint 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!

It's a Tall Ass! I love this! Bravo! And we just know the taluses are going to show up as important in TBOTSS because of the inordinate amount of time Wolfe spent on the factory that makes them, so it's a tie between the series. Hooray!

-alga-

Peter Westlake — 12 Jun 1998, 09:58 · follows Alice Turner

At 23:56 1998-06-11 -0400, Alice Turner wrote:
Four-Eyes:

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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!

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It's a bit bigger than that, isn't it? And it walks, too, rather than having caterpillar tracks. When Severian looks at the Ascian armies from the Autarch's flyer (why don't flyers float right off into space, BTW?) he see "machines as big as fortresses", which I take to be the same thing. They look like towers walking.

They might be intelligent in the same way as taluses, of course. That would make more sense than having soldiers on board if you were going to leave one down a mine for centuries.

(Would you really want one of those things aboard the Whorl?
"Stamp! Stamp! Crunch, crack, wheeeeeeee...")

Sbear.

Michael Straight — 12 Jun 1998, 13:36 · follows Peter Westlake

On Thu, 11 Jun 1998, Alice Turner wrote:

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I'm not sure I know any such thing. My impression in reading that bit was that Blood's talus had been an important enough character that Wolfe (Horn?) wanted to give the reader some background about where taluses come from.

Like Chekov says, if a gun goes off in the first act, you better make sure someone finds it on the mantle in the third act.

-Rostrum