

Agilus' mask

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 01 Jul 1997

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Ranjit Bhatnagar — 01 Jul 1997, 13:23

Apropos of nothing, how come the ribbon still showed after Agilus took off his mask?

-r.

strange thoughts that occur on the bus to work

Joshua A. Solomon — 02 Jul 1997, 10:38 · follows Ranjit Bhatnagar

Ranjit Bhatnagar wrote:

Apropos of nothing, how come the ribbon still showed after
Agilus took off his mask?

I always assumed it's because he had another mask on underneath.

bee

m.driussi — 02 Jul 1997, 14:00 · follows Joshua A. Solomon

Reply: Item #1388846 from URTH at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET#

bee and r.,

The line in question: "The ribbons that held your mask," I said. "They're still there."

We are taking this as literal. But it can also be Severian's laconic way of saying, "Look, you are still play-acting as though I were not the simple torturer that I am." (Agilus is acting, but he doesn't really grasp that Severian is a genuine torturer--Agilus assumes Severian to be an armiger or armiger-wannabe in costume for a party.)

And it can be metaphorical, saying that Agilus's real face is as much another mask as Doctor Talos's face is that of a stuffed fox.

But it cannot be literally true that Agilus is wearing a second mask--since the face Severian sees looks like Agia and the face he will later see when Agilus is a prisoner in the cell. Or if Agilus is wearing a second mask, it is unusual in that it looks exactly like his face, which leads back into the laconic and metaphorical readings.

=mantis=