

Agilus's mask(s)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Jul 1997

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Charles Dye — 06 Jul 1997, 14:54

From: m.driussi at genie.com

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.

I'll vote for "literal." The ribbon is still in place when Agilus (now masked in iron) arrives to duel with Severian, whose "perfect memory" apparently fails him in the excitement. My guess is that the ribbon is tied loosely to the mask with knots which release at a tug. Severian, perhaps not the world's most sensitive soul, can't be the first customer to complain about the reception that this store offers.

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