

Hints about Conciliator from volume names

The Urth list — 6 messages, 6 voices, 22 Jun 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/843>

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John Moar — 22 Jun 1998, 14:11

On Fri, 19 Jun 1998, adam louis stephanides wrote:

Is it certain, for instance, in the first four books that Severian himself will one day become the Conciliator?

I would say there is no hint in the first four books that Severian was/will become the Conciliator. But I could be wrong.

Of course I'm citation-less here, but I think that you are wrong. IIRC, there are at least a few clues vaguely scattered throughout BotNS that Severian maybe, just maybe is the Conciliator. The most obvious is the fact that the we discover that his powers don't come from the Claw of the Conciliator but from himself. These powers (healing people) are the same as those attributed to the Conciliator. In addition, the Conciliator is also referred to as the New Sun. We are certainly led to believe that Severian will bring the New Sun, which is another link.

Just a thought about how the titles of tBotNS volumes might imply that Severian is the Conciliator.

Now, it is obvious that Severian is a torturer, a lictor and an autarch - each of which appears as the second noun of the title on one of the volumes. So, this might suggest that this is part of the title format. But, in this case, `_Claw_` doesn't fit.

However, if Severian is the Conciliator, then there is a consistent pattern of titles. Furthermore, it might mean he `_always has been_` the Conciliator (since he performs the functions of the title in the other books, but is no more the Conciliator in `_Claw_` than anywhere else before `_Urth_`)

I think there may be other clues but I couldn't say off hand.

And of course, all this is much more "obvious" (as much as anything by Wolfe is obvious) after reading UotNS because you're suddenly looking for clues (and possibly finding ones that aren't really there).

-Dave

James Moar

"...it represents for me all that monomaniacal fabric of argument, so tightly woven that not even the tiniest objection or spark of light can escape its net, in which human minds become enmeshed whenever the subject is one in which no appeal to fact is possible" - `_Sword_`, Ch. 38

adam louis stephanides — 23 Jun 1998, 11:11 · follows John Moar

On Mon, 22 Jun 1998 James Moar wrote:

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Brilliant! (And though it's not relevant to your broader point, the pattern continues in _Urth_; Severian is the New Sun too. And there's a pattern to the first parts of the titles: in the first book it's something completely insubstantial, and in the succeeding books they're larger and larger objects.)

So I was wrong: in retrospect there are clearly clues in BotNS that Severian is the Conciliator. I still suspect, though, that these clues would not have been picked up for what they are in retrospect had _Urth_ not appeared. In BotNS there is always a distinction made between the Conciliator, who will *be* the New Sun, and Severian who will *bring* the New Sun. Before _Urth_ these two functions don't even appear compatible; what sense could we make from BotNS alone of the idea of Severian undergoing a trial to determine whether he was the Conciliator? And these considerations are even more applicable to the more ambiguous clues cited by Dave and by Don Parmenter.

But here we're faced with the impossible task of determining how the discussion of BotNS would have developed after fifteen years if _Urth_ had never appeared.

--Adam

Jason Voegele — 24 Jun 1998, 01:57 · follows adam louis stephanides

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Just to throw my two cents in on this one, I think that clues are strewn about TBOTNS for all of the major revelations of UOTNS. While I can't offer proof for any particular case, I can say that I did not read UOTNS for some months after completing the tetralogy, and I went into Urth assuming, among other things, that Severian was in fact the Conciliator. The most obvious clue to this--as has already been noted--is the title of the second book.

In `_Castle of the Otter_` (p. 297 of `_Castle of Days_`) discussing contract negotiations for `The Book`, Wolfe says:

"I responded with [snip] the suggestion that the word `_title_` be struck from a list of things to be controlled by the publisher."

It is obvious that the titles held some meaning greater than just using big words and sounding good. The symmetry of the titles is consistent throughout the series, not only in the four individual volumes, but also in the title of the tetralogy (it is, after all, `Severian's Book`), and also in `_Urth of the New Sun_`

As for clues to other revelations made in `URTH`, I'm sure they are there even if I can't find any at the moment. But considering all the detective work this group has done, it seems like a worthy case to delve into.

Jason Voegele

Marc Coleman — 24 Jun 1998, 08:58 · follows Jason Voegele

I think there may be other clues but I couldn't say off hand.

I think the wine in the water ewer, which is repeatedly mentioned in `UotNS`, is a good clue that `Sev` is the `Conciliator`. He returns to the same town, `Saltus`, as `Conciliator`. My first post! marc

Jack Redelfs — 25 Jun 1998, 07:37 · follows Marc Coleman

From `urth-errors` at `lists.best.com` Tue Jun 23 23:06:09 1998

Received: (from `daemon@localhost`) by `lists1.best.com` (8.8.8/8.8.BEST)

id `XAA17212` for `urth-errors` at `lists.best.com`; Tue, 23 Jun 1998 23:01:18 -0700 (PDT)

Message-Id: <199806240601.XAA17212 at lists1.best.com>

From: "Jason Voegele" <voegele.6 at osu.edu>

Subject: Re: (urth) Hints about `Conciliator` from volume names

Date: Wed, 24 Jun 1998 01:57:49 -0400

BestServHost: `lists.best.com`

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain;

charset="us-ascii"

Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

Sender: `urth-errors` at `lists.best.com`

Errors-To: `urth-errors` at `lists.best.com`

Reply-To: `urth` at `lists.best.com`

To: `urth` at `lists.best.com`

I'm new to the list and this is my first message.

It was pretty clear to about halfway through

the `BotNS` that `Severian` was the `Conciliator`.

It's just seems eminently obvious.

Michael Straight — 25 Jun 1998, 10:35 · follows Jack Redelfs

On Thu, 25 Jun 1998, Jack Redelfs wrote:

I'm new to the list and this is my first message.

It was pretty clear to about halfway through

the BotNS that Severian was the Conciliator.

It's just seems eminently obvious.

In what sense? Did you feel Severian was, unknown to himself, the "reincarnation" of the Conciliator, or did you guess that he would end up time travelling and becoming the Conciliator, or did you imagine it some other way?

-Rostrum