

Little Sev; Fomalhautian

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 23 Jun 1998

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adam louis stephanides — 23 Jun 1998, 10:58

On Mon, 22 Jun 1998 James Moar wrote:

The first is the thematic point of the whole sequence in `_Sword_` with `> Little Severian`. I can see how it suggests Severian has a sister, `>` lets Severian's development of a conscience be shown, and carries `>` forward a few plot points with Agia and Alzabos. But Little Severian `>` is around for a long time to be just a plot function, and I don't `>` quite get it.

Well, as you say it marks a stage in Severian's moral development.

He's taking responsibility for the consequences of his earlier lack of forgiveness, and it's the only sequence I can recollect at the moment in which Severian is shown as taking care of someone dependent on him for an extended period of time (apart perhaps from Dorcas in Thrax, but there he struck me as neglecting her.) It also shows Big Severian in a more likable light than usual.

More specifically, as I said in my earlier post on "New Sun miscellany," it's when Little Severian is killed that Severian first (as far as we know) entertains the ambition to overcome time, which he fulfills by becoming the New Sun. I don't know if these will strike you as sufficient to justify the time spent on Little Severian, though.

Spectacled Bear writes:

The extraterrestrial mind contacted by the Cumaean I took to be just some ancient Fomalhautian of no other particular significance.

That was my point. As far as we're concerned, the extraterrestrial mind is "just some ancient Fomalhautian." Wolfe undoubtedly has a whole backstory explaining who the Fomalhautian is and his/her connection with the Cumaean, but unless it's mentioned in BotSS or Wolfe's notes are published we'll never know it.

--Adam