

Sev and Thecla in childhood

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 21 Sep 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1103>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Jon Camfield — 21 Sep 1998, 19:35

mantis, you've already seen this, but as I don't have my books nearby and the list is as quiet as a convent, I figured I'd post it:

Last time I reread TBotNS, this passage in Claw struck me as very odd. Story-line wise, this is right after the troupe's performance in the House Absolute, when Severian has become separated, walks to exhaustion, and has memory-mixed dreams of himself and Thecla.

"...I played again with pebbles in the courtyard beside the fallen curtain wall, as Thecla dodged the hooves of my father's mounted guard" (II, XXV, 204)

The first part, up to 'curtain wall', is Severian, that's easy, he said at some point that the pebbles memory is his earliest (until he recalls his mother before the meeting with the undine the next night).

"as Thecla dodged the hooves" could also be Sev, having synchronized his and Thecla's memories; Sev was piling pebbles in the Citadel, while, at the same time, Thecla was dodging hooves.

"of my father's mounted guard" is really troublesome. It's not Thecla, because Sev is (presumably, no hints to the contrary) still talking in the first person, and describing Thecla in the third. This implies it is Severian's father. Going out somewhat on a limb, I propose this: Dorcas is Severian's paternal grandmother, mother of Ouen, as you say. The mother of Severian is or is not Katherine, but is the mother of Thecla as well (Thecla then becomes the half-sister of Sev, with a smidgin more of evidence only than Merryn). Ouen seems to have had an affair with an exultant, who already had a daughter (Thecla). Sev was given to the torturers (being somewhat of a bastard) (possibly the exultant had, since giving birth to Thecla, gone to be one of the bride's of the Autarch?). Ouen and Sev were shipped off to the citadel, Sev to be given to the Torturer's, Ouen to be delivered back to Nessus, maybe even tortured (hence the mounted guard) before being set free. This would explain the origin of the memory, as well as Sev's bastard-exultant lineage, and the missing-sister problem.

Fire at will.

Jon Camfield "GriffJon" | Webmaster, Plan II Honors Program: GriffJon at mail.utexas.edu | www.dla.utexas.edu/~plan2 Homepage, Gallery, Resume: | Channel Manager, Undernet #Poetry ccwf.cc.utexas.edu/~griffjon | www.tripod.com/~ircpoetry

"The most incomprehensible fact about nature is that it is comprehensible"
-- Albert Einstein

Tony Ellis — 22 Sep 1998, 15:42 · follows Jon Camfield

Jon Camfield wrote:

"...I played again with pebbles in the courtyard beside the fallen curtain wall, as Thecla dodged the hooves of my father's mounted guard" (II, XXV, 204)

<snip>

"of my father's mounted guard" is really troublesome. It's not Thecla, because Sev is (presumably, no hints to the contrary) still talking in the first person, and describing Thecla in the third. This implies it is Severian's father...

I really think you're seeing complications that aren't there with this one. TBOTNS is full of moments where Thecla's personality surfaces and speaks, or rather writes, in the first person. All that's happening here is that it's happening within the confines of one sentence for effect. The transition presumably takes place after "wall", but anywhere before "my father's mounted guard" would do.

Matthew Malthouse — 28 Sep 1998, 09:10 · follows Tony Ellis

Tony Ellis wrote:

Jon Camfield wrote:

"...I played again with pebbles in the courtyard beside the fallen curtain wall, as Thecla dodged the hooves of my father's mounted guard" (II, XXV, 204)

<snip>

"of my father's mounted guard" is really troublesome. It's not Thecla, because Sev is (presumably, no hints to the contrary) still talking in the first person, and describing Thecla in the third. This implies it is Severian's father...

I really think you're seeing complications that aren't there with this one. TBOTNS is full of moments where Thecla's personality surfaces and speaks, or rather writes, in the first person. All that's happening here is that it's happening within the confines of one sentence for effect. The transition presumably takes place after "wall", but anywhere before "my father's mounted guard" would do.

I'm inclined to agree. Making the sentence ...the fallen curtain wall, and as Thecla... would have remove the ambiguity but it isn't actually necessary to add the "and" for it to be read as a change of view point from Sev. to Thecla.

Matthew