

Sev and Thecla in childhood + Free Live Free

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 22 Sep 1998

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Peter Stephenson — 22 Sep 1998, 10:30

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)

I do find it hard to escape the implication that Severian's real father is intended, and that somehow Severian and Thecla combined have worked out who he is --- what else could it mean? No dream or daydream in the Book is that alone, just as nothing real fails to have the faint aura of a dream. I'm not convinced it makes sense that they know, but maybe a strong likeness with a bit of subconscious deduction is intended.

Free Live Free:

I didn't really like this. Part of the problem is Wolfe's post-New-Sun style, which for my taste contains too much flabby and unenlightening dialogue over trifles (all right, so at least it's realistic :-)). To go with the offbeat story, I was expecting more sense that something deeper was going on, but didn't get it.

On the whole I quite liked the ending even if I didn't quite understand how it all tied in. The fantasy element seemed unconnected with the rest of the novel, though that's not so uncommon in modern fiction (John Fowles' 'A Maggot' seems to have something similar going on). Maybe it's all down to Wolfe's wish to write a particular sort of not-quite-mainstream novel.

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