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The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 05 Oct 1998

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Jon Camfield — 05 Oct 1998, 22:26

Mark Millman writes:

[snip!] The name may be the result of witches' having use-names and true-names; the designation "witches" implies study or use of magic, and we know that at least some magic does work on Urth, as Severian's duel with Declan demonstrates. Hiding one's true name to prevent its being used in hostile magic is a widely-distributed, very ancient magical practice.

Two things-- Magic in Urth is very very limited, and for all intents and purposes does not exist (according to Wolfe) the Declan duel Wolfe describes as more psionic and hypnoyic than anything else.

Of course, this doesn't mean that the Witches don't hide the true name, or, in truth, never even knew the true name. Sev was supposedly born in the Obuilette ar right before Catherine was put in it. If he had a twin sister, she would have been given to the witches possibly without giving them her given name, whilst Severian kept his as he remained in the tower with his mother for longer (note that Sev doesn't remember a sister when he finally remembers his mother)

I think Barbea is unlikely as a candidate as she is a khaibit and therefore a clone of the original (somewhere I think Inire or Apian came out and said that directly). Merryn is a candidate only because she has little to no other plot value (reference to the Catherine of the wheel-- what other plot importance does that woman have?), and is a witch.

In somewhat of a ironic idea (Wolfe employ irony? never!) Sev's sister could be an unmentioned person in the Healer's Tower. Master Gurloes mentions this tower in one of his rambling lectures to Sev (in which he tends to drop hints he probably shouldn't), but it is never made issue again. The sister would be a 'light' sister to contrast with Sev's 'dark' upbringing, and would be a healer, in line with the Pelerine thread, and would still be within the complex of the Citadel.

...Or this could all be a red herring. Many road signs (some of which exist) pointing towards a nothingness.

My \$0.04 (inflation's a bitch.)

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

Mark Millman — 06 Oct 1998, 09:26 · follows Jon Camfield

On 6 October at 3:27 am GMT, Jon Canfield wrote:

Mark Millman writes:

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You're right, of course. I should have said "something thought to be magic". Which, as you kindly indicate, still permits my argument.

Mark Millman