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The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 09 Oct 1998

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Kieran Mullen — 09 Oct 1998, 19:15

Robert Borski writes:

I also think it's fairly obvious that Valeria is Catherine's mother (meaning Severian has slept with both grandmothers).

Umm... Obvious? Isn't there a problem with time here?

Catherine also has access to the Corridors of Time.

Ah! So that's how you get around this one. Care to explain why you think the above are true?

I had hoped that Wolfe was a great writer. From this mailing list he seems to be like one of those hack mystery writers who have the butler just coincidentally be the father of Lord Billings *and* be the brother-in-law of the deceased.

Kieran Mullen

Peter Stephenson — 10 Oct 1998, 13:22 · follows Kieran Mullen

Kieran Mullen wrote:

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I have to pipe up and admit that I have worries along these line. The great strength I find in Wolfe is the overarching themes and links between them. Having all the characters tie up in this narrow way seems to reduce it to a certain extent to a family soap opera. Severian's family certainly *should* be important somehow, I'm just a bit worried about the way it's done. Wolfe's in good company, though; lots of major authors have links of this kind (Dickens is full of it, although I take it none of his characters are their own ancestors), but that doesn't make it `right`.

But that's a highly personal assessment, of course. I'm entirely convinced the links are really there, and it's fascinating to hear all these things I never suspected. Indeed, you could quite easily read every word of the Book twice and not have the smallest idea what any of these arguments were about. (In fact, would somebody mind sketching a brief family history of Valeria for those of us left behind? ta.)

corncrake
(craking at the corn)

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Michael Straight — 12 Oct 1998, 08:39 · follows Peter Stephenson

On Sat, 10 Oct 1998, Peter Stephenson wrote:

I have to pipe up and admit that I have worries along these line. The great strength I find in Wolfe is the overarching themes and links between them. Having all the characters tie up in this narrow way seems to reduce it to a certain extent to a family soap opera. Severian's family certainly **should** be important somehow, I'm just a bit worried about the way it's done. Wolfe's in good company, though; lots of major authors have links of this kind (Dickens is full of it, although I take it none of his characters are their own ancestors), but that doesn't make it `right'.

I've long suspected I have some sort of deficiency because I am utterly unmoved by these kinds of revelations. Vader is Luke's father? Leia is Luke's sister? Yawn. Let's see some more spaceships blowing up.

Dorcas's identity interests me more because it shows how she's been dead or suspended for a long time than because she's related to Severian. I guess the whole sleeping with your grandmother thing provokes a satisfying "eeeew!" as well. I just hope Silk doesn't turn out to be Severian's son, brother, clone, grandfather, or twin sister.

Maybe my family life was just too humdrum for these kinds of things to have any emotional resonance for me.

-Rostrum