

Sundry

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 10 Nov 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1949>

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Charles Dye — 10 Nov 1999, 18:04

"Daniel Fusch" writes:

Severian tells us, however, that torturers are not supposed to make decisions or judgements. Their task is blind, unquestioning obedience to the decisions passed down to them by the proper authorities. Severian even tells us that he feels extremely uncomfortable when placed in the position of judge, is that he has developed an extreme aversion to judging, so that he is glad when Foila keeps postponing the judgement.

Ah, but Severian changes during the course of TBOTNS. One of his first official acts as Autarch, in Chapter XXXIV of Citadel, is judgment of the Guild's clients. In a few cases, he overturns the sentences imposed by the judges of the Commonwealth. If Severian ever had a horror of rendering judgments, I think he lost it somewhere along the way.

Mantis suggests:

Or we can take the female path of stone cold sobriety: Foila gives her judgement of the suitors in "The Armiger's Daughter."

Slam dunk; home run; game over. The fight was rigged from the start. But that didn't make it unworthy to participate in.

Is the fight rigged? Foila's story obviously reflects her situation and tells us a great deal about her character. But I think it's noteworthy that the maid in Foila's tale does not "choose to keep herself for herself."

Shortly before Foila tells her story, the Pelerines' slave Winnoc informs us that "There's only three ways a man can be a slave.... Though for a woman it's different, what with marriage and the like." I don't think that Foila's story necessarily tells us **who** she intends to marry. Rather, she's letting her suitors (and us) know just **how** the marriage is going to work. The armiger's daughter is the brains of the partnership; she knows how to give orders by requesting a decision. Foila is a combat veteran, and she wants it understood that she is not going to be a chattel of her future husband -- whoever he turns out to be.

On the other hand, it's entirely possible that Foila has already decided who will win the contest, and intends to nudge Severian in the correct direction if she sees that he's about to get it wrong. One obvious way would be to clarify the word "best."

JMCAzurin <mikah at brewsoft.com> writes regarding Severian's "last" and later visits to the mausoleum:

This doesn't have to be either an outright lie or a memory failure. You might simply interpret the quote as, "The day after my elevation, I went to the tomb. Little did I know it would be my last such visit as a member in good standing of the order of seekers of truth and penitence, for I was soon to be exiled for facilitating Thecla's suicide."

You could also view it as being literally accurate. The Severian who visits the tomb as Autarch is not the same man as the one who placed the coin under the stone.

raster at highfiber.com

(Chattel. Chatelaine. Hm.)

Daniel Fusch — 11 Nov 1999, 02:13 · follows Charles Dye

(snip)

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(Charles writes)

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Well, that may be...but at the time of the storytelling contest, Severian has an aversion to judging.