

Severian's Family

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 02 Jan 1998

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CRCulver — 02 Jan 1998, 01:30

Friends,

We know (have guessed, rather) that Severian's mother is Katherine and his sister is Merryn (previously Severa). My question is: who is Severian's father. If Katherine was being tortured whilst in the Citadel, and was pregnant with Severian and Merryn, where did she come from? I tend to think that Katherine was in much the same position as Thecla, i.e. she was an exultant who was captured and taken to the Guild of Torturers. Then, can we say that Severian's father was an Exultant? I seem to recall Severian mentioning his exultant-like height somewhere in the BotNS.

Yes, ii's shaky reasoning, but I'm good at it <g>
So, what do you all think?

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"Ignorance, that light of fools steers a wayward path"
-Brendan Perry

m.driussi — 07 Jan 1998, 01:53 · follows CRCulver

Reply: Item #6535242 from URTH at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET02#

Terence Nickolette,

The presumed detail of Severian's family tree was one of the earliest topics of working out TBOTNS, beginning with Clute's essay in 1986. There are many, many little points upon which everybody argues almost endlessly. Having argued over most of it a few times too many, I find I don't have the energy to do more than point in general directions at this time!

Re: Cath as Severian's mother. It hinges mainly upon: the revelation that Ouen the waiter at the Inn of Lost Loves is Severian's biological father, who had met and loved a woman named Cath, said woman disappeared from his life when taken away by authorities for some unknown crime. This meshes nicely with the bits that Severian tells of children in the Matachin Tower (born of prisoners), as well as what he tells of his own mother (nursing Sev in a cell). The link between this Cath and that Kath is the passage you've already alluded to--Clute and everybody since him has used the "pool = mirror = maid looks like Sev" line of reasoning.

Re: the historical Kath (i.e., Patron Saint of torturers). First, I'm not claiming that the same maid has been working the feast drama for a chiliad--I'm all but insisting that the same woman is playing the role for the duration of Severian's apprenticeship, and after the feast of his elevation she vanishes, never to be seen again. This is pretty much the facts given in the text. Where I spin off is to speculate that Cath vanishes into the corridors of time and winds up

becoming the historical Kath in the same sort of way that Sev winds up becoming the historical Conciliator--hundreds or thousands of years in the past.

Re: Merryn as his sister. Well, Merryn shows up very few times. If you look at these scenes you will notice that Merryn and Severian are the same age: 23 years old. And, back to those notes about children among the torturers, you recall that baby girls are handed over to the witches. Finally, there is the issue of twins--Severian and Severa are well known twin names (witness the twins at the pioneer hut in the mountains), and a few times Sev is asked if he has a sister; the last time, with Ava in volume four, he says that if he does, then she is a witch. Well, this repetition leads many to believe that Merryn is Sev's sister.

Forgive me if I say no more on the subject. Perhaps others will!

=mantis=

Kieran Cleary — 08 Jan 1998, 11:06 · follows m.driussi

Happy New Year everyone.

Y'know, if it hasn't already been done, someone should really publish all those essays (mantis, Clute, whoever) in a single collection....

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