

golden Severa etc.

The Urth list — 14 messages, 9 voices, 15 May 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4593>

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b sharp — 15 May 2006, 19:39

Well, let me open another can of worms regarding physical attributes.

Robert Borski notes (and has published) that Severian's family may be identified by their golden attributes denoting the New Sun, (and also Severian-Savior stigmata, i.e cheek injuries and limping). If so, should not red haired characters be associated with the old, dying sun in some way?

Dorcas is perhaps the most golden, with gold hair and gold flecks in her skin (+ cheek injury) and is, ostensibly, Sev's grandmother. Contrast this to Eata with similar features who is described as tow-headed and freckled sans gold.

Agia and Agilus have pale gold skin and aureate faces and hair when the sun hits them and are suggested to be Sev's cousins. (Agia limps for a time but I think it is feigned). Contrast this to Pia who is described as having skin the color of a brass serving tray. Like gold color but not really.

Borski addresses the issue of the missing sister, Severa. He discards the often promoted candidate Merryn, and other lesser candidates such as Morwenna, the Mandragora and Thais. These are seen as red herring Severas derived from false clues. His candidates are Jolenta, with her red-gold hair (and clumsy walk) and the kaibit/prostitute Barbea who has hair like spun gold (though she dances nicely) with the suggestion these two are, in fact the same person.

But I think the text suggests these two are also false gold. Barbea's hair is twice referred to as a possible wig (the next young woman's hair/wig is white). And Jolenta's hair has been dyed (red?) and had silk threads added (gold?). It is hard to think that her original "straggling" hair was either of those striking colors. Moreover, I expect Severa to be somewhat intelligent and philosophical and as both Severian and Dorcas (and even Agia/Agilus to a degree) are. Jolenta calls the Pellerines "Pelisses" and her deepest thoughts seem to be on how to procure pampering and contemplation of the autarch's urine as the wine of his subjects.

Now by rights, if I am to undercut someone's candidate I should propose my own. Unfortunately I am still working on that as piece of a larger puzzle, but I will present it when ready.

In its stead I'll hint that Borski has missed a character who is described in unequivocally golden terms. He has several pieces of gold jewelry and golden hair (and blue eyes). Follow-up in my next post.

-bsharp

mournings glory — 15 May 2006, 20:47 · in reply to b sharp

From: "b sharp" <bsharporflat at hotmail.com>

Borski addresses the issue of the missing sister, Severa. He discards the often promoted candidate Merryyn, and other lesser candidates such as Morwenna, the Mandragora and Thais.

For the longest time I was an advocate of the Morwenna-as-Severa theory and have posted so before, but on my last read through I concluded she was more likely related to Manahen and his father, both herdsman -- as Severian tells us Morwenna's father is. Plus there's the Morwenna-Manahen cryptonym pair.

(Lots of these the aforementioned author missed, perhaps the most salient of which is alzabo/abo.)

Jolenta I'm still thinking about. She's been completely transmogrified from waitress to diva, so she may not be so much dumb as full of herself -- plus if she's modeled on Marilyn Monroe, who was actually quite smart, she might just be enacting a stereotype. But I've also found two other items of support that I don't believe anyone, including Mr. Borski, has mentioned before.

One comes from the play, Eschatology and Genesis. At one point the Inquisitor tells the Familiar, "Bring in the woman said to be a witch, Brother." To which the Familiar responds, "The Contessa waits outside, and as she is of exalted blood, and a favorite of our sovereign's, I beg you to see her first." Indeed, the Contessa -- played by Jolenta -- is presented first, but if she really is Severa the Inquisitor's command has actually been obeyed, if ironically so.

Then there's a passage about Agia and Agilus, and following the latter's execution:

"From far away came a scream, Agia's voice as unmistakable as *a face seen by lightning.* Something in its timbre made me feel she had not been watching at all, but had known nevertheless when her twin died."

Now compare this to Severian's description of Jolenta after the events in the stone town:

"Our mounts were gone. On the roof, so were the witches; Dorcas, alone, bent over the body of Jolenta. *By lightning, I saw the dead face* of the waitress who had served Dr. Talos, Baldanders, and me in the café in Nessus."

In its stead I'll hint that Borski has missed a character who is described in unequivocally golden terms. He has several pieces of gold jewelry and golden hair (and blue eyes). Follow-up in my next post.

Gold jewelry might be more of an accoutrement than gold hair; I believe it's Dr. Talos -- who obviously could not be a relative -- also carried a gold walking stick. And you don't mean blond, as opposed to gold, do you? Now you've got my curiosity up...

em (who wonders how Marilyn Monroe, with a six-toed foot, did the "This little piggy went to the market" bit.)

Roy C. Lackey — 16 May 2006, 22:44 · follows mournings glory

b sharp wrote:

In its stead I'll hint that Borski has missed a character who is described in unequivocally golden terms. He has several pieces of gold jewelry and golden hair (and blue eyes). Follow-up in my next post.

And in a follow-up post, b sharp wrote:

[snip]

Well, once you have created a zygote/embryo/homunculus, you need a place for it to grow. Thus, perhaps we can determine the use of the eviscerated Pia look-alike in Baldander's lab. And what homunculus did Baldanders recently grow there?

In Baldander's bedchamber, Severian encounters a giant baby catamite (boy sex object of a pedophile). If there is doubt on whether there is sexual intention, the baby's gold jewelry, the rich red bedding and the mirror on the ceiling should leave no doubt.

Pedophiles are often attracted to children because of their perceived innocence. Baldanders had recently been in close contact with a person repeatedly described as innocent looking, the only other character (along with the catamite) to have golden hair and blue eyes. But perhaps just a bit too feminine for Baldy.

[snip]

Just for the record, Robert did not miss the giant baby in the castle. In fact, his discussion of that child forms the concluding section of the chapter "Swimming With Undines", in SOLAR LABYRINTH. From page 135, after quoting the physical description in SWORD:

"Of signal importance here is the color of the child's hair -- i.e., *_gold_*. As I argue in *_Severa_* and *_Agia and Agilus_*, Wolfe very circumspectly uses this attribute *_only* in conjunction with people related to Severian by blood_. I'd therefore like to speculate that the giant child Severian finds in Baldanders' bedchamber is *_his_*." [italics in original]

-Roy

David DiGiacomo — 16 May 2006, 23:00 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Pedophiles are often attracted to children because of their perceived innocence.

I know this is not really relevant to Wolfe, but... this assertion just has me floored. Where did this idea come from? How could anyone possibly know? What does "often" mean? Would these pedophiles be attracted to adults if they seemed especially innocent?

Jeff Wilson — 17 May 2006, 07:39 · in reply to David DiGiacomo

David DiGiacomo wrote:

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Pedophilia has been studied and profiled the same way most criminal pathologies have been. "Often" here means a behavior shared by a significant portion of the group studied.

Would these pedophiles be attracted to adults if they seemed especially innocent?

Like Dorcas? Possibly, but not necessarily.

David DiGiacomo — 17 May 2006, 07:50 · follows Jeff Wilson

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Pedophilia has been studied and profiled the same way most criminal pathologies have been. "Often" here means a behavior shared by a significant portion of the group studied.

Yes, but this statement is about motivation, not behavior.

As I said, how could anyone know?

What external evidence could possibly validate the assertion?

If a pedophile described his motivation, even if you believed he was honest, what use would it be? Introspection can't explain biology.

b sharp — 17 May 2006, 12:05 · follows David DiGiacomo

Thanks (once again) to Roy for the correction. As a new guy, I really do appreciate them. Robert Borski didn't miss the catamite as I thought. Sorry I don't have Solar Labyrinth here to check but the explanation for the catamite you cite from him is hard to swallow:

I'd therefore like to speculate that the giant child Severian finds in Baldanders' bedchamber is _his_.

Its been a few months since Baldanders and Severian parted. How was there time for a Severian fathered baby to gestate and be born? Who was the mother (Dorcas or Jolenta or Juturna or ?)? How did Baldanders get control of this baby? Isn't obtaining a few cells from Dorcas a more plausible scenario?

Regarding the question of pedophile psychology posed by David DiGiacoma, I apologize. I spent several years of my life working as a counselor for sex offenders in a correctional facility. This experience surely makes me forget that some acknowledged principles of this field are not common knowledge. As a brief thumbnail summary I'll note that predatory, violent sex offenders tend to prefer any helpless victim they can control and hurt while non-violent sex offenders tend to prefer the innocence of children and gentle, non-violent means of persuasion.

My experience was in the midwest USA. A quick Google search provided this passage from a pedophile study in England which agrees with my previous experience in this field. (it is an interesting article- <http://www.mhamic.org/sources/wilson&cox.htm>):

In this study, subjects were asked to describe the characteristics they found attractive in children. >They cited personality traits slightly more often than physical traits. Personality traits included >openness, curiosity, spontaneity, enthusiasm, lack of inhibition, innocence, honesty, and affection. >Physical traits included good looks, smooth skin, attractive eyes, slim stature, and lack of pubic hair.

Wouldn't Dorcas fit most of those traits? Dr. Talos calls her Innocence and says he prefers her over Jolenta. Hm..

The inspiration for Jolenta has been postulated to be Marilyn Monroe. I would like to propose another semi-serious possibility (and please excuse my irreverence) that being Gilligan's Island. Is this a tv show known outside the USA? The time frame is right for a Wolfe inspiration.....

On this island we have two castaway women: 1. Tall, busty, jeweled, painted, vain, selfish, manipulative, stupid, red headed actress Ginger. 2. Smaller, sweet, innocent and ultimately more desirable Mary Ann (okay, dark haired but otherwise..). I really do think the Ginger-Jolenta similarity is striking.

So Sev is Gilligan, the Skipper is Baldanders and...sorry, sorry, nevermind ;).

-bsharp

mournings glory — 17 May 2006, 16:10 · in reply to b sharp

From the muscically-gifted b sharp:

Thanks (once again) to Roy for the correction. As a new guy, I really do appreciate them. Robert Borski didn't miss the catamite as I thought.

Sorry

I don't have Solar Labyrinth here to check but the explanation for the catamite you cite from him is hard to swallow.

Its been a few months since Baldanders and Severian parted. How was there time for a Severian fathered baby to gestate and be born? Who was the mother

(Dorcas or Jolenta or Juturna or ?)?

The theory, as I understand it, posits Juturna as mother. As an undine she has mastery over time, so neither the baby's age nor size needs to be accounted for. In regards to the latter Baldander tells us that he has "labored three lifetimes" to get to his present size; accelerating growth, whether one's own or a baby's, therefore seems problematic.

From finagain, not gilligan:

Wow. Now I'm *really* confused. I don't have text references available, but I always thought it was axiomatic that Baldanders was a baby Abaia -- and as such, an alien infant dropped or otherwise delivered to Urth

"I had already concluded," says Sev, "that when the islanders told me of a small man who paid for the building of this place, they were speaking of the doctor. But they said that you, the giant, had come afterward."

"I was the small man," admits Baldanders. "The doctor came afterward."

Hence Baldanders (note the German name) is both Dr. Frankenstein *and* his monster -- a fact alluded to by Dr. Talos in his "The castle? The monster? The man of learning?" speech, found in Chapter XXXV of -Sword_.

msg

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 17 May 2006, 17:20 · in reply to David DiGiacomo

On 5/17/06, David DiGiacomo <david at slack.com> wrote:

Pedophiles are often attracted to children because of their perceived

innocence.

I know this is not really relevant to Wolfe, but... this assertion just has me floored. Where did this idea come from? How could anyone possibly know? What does "often" mean?

Pedophilia has been studied and profiled the same way most criminal pathologies have been. "Often" here means a behavior shared by a significant portion of the group studied.

Yes, but this statement is about motivation, not behavior.

As I said, how could anyone know?

What external evidence could possibly validate the assertion?

If a pedophile described his motivation, even if you believed he was honest, what use would it be? Introspection can't explain biology.

Where to begin ...

First of all, pedophilia, unlike gayosity, does not appear to be significantly biological in origin. (Twin studies, etc.)

Second, you seem to be taking an extreme behaviorist position, which I think is pretty much outmoded.

Third ... it is certainly possible to study the type of children more victimized by pedophiles and create an "ideal victim" profile that exemplifies the characteristics a pedophile seeks in a child. And, while "innocence" is not an observable characteristic, certain physical, social, and behavioral features that tend to be perceived as "innocence" are. Some of these are simply typical of children; others, such as mode of dress, manner of speech, reaction to strangers, etc., vary greatly from child to child.

If -- and I have not studied work on pedophilia, so I am speculating here -- such characteristics proved to be particularly attractive to pedophiles then it would be reasonable to say that "Pedophiles are often attracted to children because of their perceived innocence."

Note that in no way am I asserting that the original statement is "true." I'm merely pointing out that "how could anyone know" has a meaningful answer, though I have no personal knowledge of whether the methodology I sketch has in fact been followed.

--Dan'l

I do not fear Satan half so much as I fear those who fear him.

-- St Teresa of Avila

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

Adam Thornton — 17 May 2006, 18:38 · in reply to mournings glory

On May 17, 2006, at 11:10 AM, mournings glory wrote:

The theory, as I understand it, posits Juturna as mother.

Note also that Baldander's castle is on Lake Diuturna. Diuturna is an archaic form of Juturna. Juturna is the goddess of springs and wells.

Adam

David Duffy — 17 May 2006, 21:29 · in reply to b sharp

On Wed, 17 May 2006, b sharp wrote:

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On this island we have two castaway women: 1. Tall, busty, jeweled, painted, vain, selfish, manipulative, stupid, red headed actress Ginger. 2. Smaller, sweet, innocent and ultimately more desirable Mary Ann (okay, dark haired but otherwise..). I really do think the Ginger-Jolenta similarity is striking.

So Sev is Gilligan, the Skipper is Baldanders and...sorry, sorry, nevermind ;).

If you read through the archives (somewhere in 1999), you will find Gilligan's Island has previously come up, in a sterling example of practical hermeneutics...

David Duffy.

Jeff Wilson — 19 May 2006, 04:44 · in reply to David DiGiacomo

David DiGiacomo wrote:

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Interviews of many unassociated pedos over time and space. It's unlikely they would come up with the same fanciful answer enough times to be statistically significant for no reason.

If a pedophile described his motivation, even if you believed he was honest, what use would it be? Introspection can't explain biology.

Apparently, it's useful for writing stories.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

David DiGiacomo — 19 May 2006, 05:59 · follows Jeff Wilson

(Sorry if no one else is interested in this admittedly off-topic discussion.)

From: jwilson at io.com (Jeff Wilson)

What external evidence could possibly validate the assertion?

Interviews of many unassociated pedos over time and space. It's unlikely they would come up with the same fanciful answer enough times to be statistically significant for no reason.

That's a valid point if true.

If a pedophile described his motivation, even if you believed he was honest, what use would it be? Introspection can't explain biology.

Apparently, it's useful for writing stories.

Wait a second, I missed something - are you saying that Wolfe used this idea of innocence in describing Baldanders's catamite? How exactly?

Also, I was struck by this "wilson&cox" quote:

In this study, subjects were asked to describe the characteristics they found attractive in children. They cited personality traits slightly more often than physical traits. Personality traits included openness, curiosity, spontaneity, enthusiasm, lack of inhibition, innocence, honesty, and affection. Physical traits included good looks, smooth skin, attractive eyes, slim stature, and lack of pubic hair.

These traits are just our societal norms of attractiveness. They are not unique to children.

brunians at brunians.org — 01 Jun 2006, 22:46 · in reply to David DiGiacomo

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I know this is not really relevant to Wolfe, but... this assertion just has me floored. Where did this idea come from?

Pedophiles.

How could anyone possibly know?

You seem to be under the impression that pedophiles are unable to communicate their thoughts and feelings.

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