

red ,gold and Baldanders

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 May 2006

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b sharp — 16 May 2006, 19:22

mourning glory presents two bits of evidence that Jolenta is Sev's sister:

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."

Thanks for bringing those to attention! Both seem significant. The lightning face echo is more convincing to me and I've not written off Jolenta as Severa yet. On the other: the Contessa might be associated with Jolenta, playing her, but she might also be related to a few other key characters who might be connected the witches. More on that later.

On to yesterday's quiz:

so who is the character decribed in unequivocally golden terms. He has several pieces of gold jewelry and golden hair (and blue eyes).

Very interesting guess, Dr. Talos. He does have that gold headed walking stick and that could be relevant here. But he has red hair not golden. What IS Dr. Talos anyway? Severian asks and is told "a homunculus". What is a homunculus (latin for little man)?

Well, the alchemist Paracelsus' homunculus was a creation from "a bag of bones, sperm, skin fragments and hair from any animal of which the homunculus would be a hybrid. This was to be laid in the ground surrounded by horse manure for forty days, at which point the embryo would form." Was a fox actually involved with Talos? Um nah... Baldanders is a real scientist.

300 years ago some true scientists felt that "each sperm was in fact a "little man" (homunculus) that was placed inside a woman for growth into a child;" This sounds more like cloning.

There are a couple references to Baldanders as Dr. Talos' father which originally led me to

believe that Baldanders cloned Talos from his own cells. Now both are small men (originally) but I think Baldanders has dark hair thatched with gray. Why would Talos come out with red hair? What other gene source could have been used? Someone who is strong in all the ways scientist Baldanders has weakness.

A few posts ago I tried to compile a list of red haired characters coming up with, aside from Talos: Roche, Jolenta, Fechin and Daria. Let's add the alzado to that list for completeness.

A surprising amount of circumstantial evidence points to Fechin as a candidate. Aside from having red hair he is from the right time frame (2-3 generations ago), and is probably from the right geography (north, near Thrax and Lake Diuturna). Also to consider is the obvious artistic flair of Talos and his ability to quickly convince a woman to do anything (leave your job, undergo major surgery, cavort naked on stage, no problem!). His lack of interest in money may also be Fechin-like.

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.

I think it is interesting that the other biological scientist we meet later in the jungle is also a pedophile. Remembering the boy Mamas, it all makes me wonder which of Talos' duties he resented more when he was a boy himself. Whacking Baldanders with his cane could be motivated by more than just caretaker duties.

-bsharp