

Domnicellae

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 31 May 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4637>

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b sharp — 31 May 2006, 11:33

Roy, good point. I think this is another example of Wolfe misleading us. And when he misleads us it is always to mask an important fact. In fact, noticing this deception was a big part of establishing Rule 2a. for me. (the mysterious relationship between Pelagia-Pega and Robert Borski's puzzlement over Josephina-Josepha were the others).

I don't have my books but I think I remember accurately. When Severian first meets the Pelerines one of the acolytes or slaves objects to the tall leader "but, Domnicellae!" Severian (and I until recently) thinks this is her title (as the "Domni- prefix might suggest) and later, thinking Cyriaca is a Pelerine, begs her for forgiveness, "shrive, me Domnicellae". Cyriaca thinks this is a very clever and hilarious joke for a fellow masquerader, a faux torturer no less, to call her by the name of the leader of the Pelerines.

In the Lazaret at Orithya (Oritheya? sheesh, sorry can't remember), one of the Pelerines mentions that "our Domnicellae isn't here" or something like that. Again sounds like a title, but it could be a term of endearment among sisters. Like, "however, our Mannea is here".

Later, though, Cyriaca makes it clear that the title of the leader of the Pelerines is The Mother. Merryn also uses this term for the leader of the very closely related sisterhood, the Witches. I think Cyriaca is first drawn to Severian (in small part) because of his cleverness. He doesn't just say "shrive me, Mother" as a less clever jokester would do. Cyriaca hasn't been a Pelerine for a long time but she has stayed in touch. She would know the personal name of The Mother.

Now, it could be assumed that Josepha is just a nickname for Josephina and Domnina the same for Domnicellae. I think this is why Wolfe included Pega and Pelagia in Urth, a book meant in part (I think), to clarify some of the puzzles in BotNS that Wolfe finally had to admit he made too difficult or vague to ever solve.

I'm sure there are those who would object that this is all conjecture. That they could just be nicknames and Pega-Pelagia is just a coincidence and that Domnicellae and The Mother are both titles for the leader, nullifying Rule 2a. For me the problem is this: we are left with no names for any kaibits.

If the kaibits were comatose in tanks, hidden in some closet for the exultant women to go in and get their daily fix then I could understand their lack of names. But kaibits are living as regular people and interacting (more or less, lol) normally with other people including their mistress/cell donor. Thus they need their own names. If someone has a better naming rule or list for kaibits then I am interested in hearing it. But this one seems to work pretty well and the option of leaving them nameless seems unacceptable. Names are very important to Gene Wolfe.

-bsharp

Daniel D Jones — 31 May 2006, 22:19 · in reply to b sharp

On Wednesday 31 May 2006 07:33, b sharp wrote:

Roy, good point. I think this is another example of Wolfe misleading us.

I, for one, would find it extremely beneficial if you'd quote what, exactly, you think it is that's a good point. There's been so many messages flowing in here lately that it's quite difficult to keep track without a quote to provide context.