

the assassin

The Urth list — 5 messages, 3 voices, 31 May 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4638>

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b sharp — 31 May 2006, 17:09

I chanced upon a couple posts from last year about the assassin Severian encounters in the Secret House on flood day. I have a possible (if not very specific) solution to his identity.

Once again I think it is tied to a Wolfe deception. I've noted some of his deception techniques, which include putting a clue far out of context in the text, pairing two clues together so you tend to forget the first one, characters making misleading, though true statements and Severian mis-identifying people.

This is something similar in that Severian, who is constantly making comparisons in the text, fails to make an obvious one. In the sorceror's jungle saddle, one of them shows Severian his weapon, a set of blades that fit between the fingers attached to a bar held in the palm. Later, in the ziggurat, Agia slaps him in the face and he loses consciousness and awakes with a torn cheek. He then starts talking about her weapon as though it was something new. He calls it a "lucivee" which has blades hidden between the fingers and a metal bar in the palm. He also mentions rings to attach the thing to two fingers, but surely it is the same weapon as that of the sorcerors.

Others have speculated that Agia is associated with the sorcerors because of the strange symbols she scratches with a coin before Agilus' execution. A juripari ,being a local S. American demon, might make sense as a totem for that group. But I haven't seen anyone connect her to the sorcerors using the lucivee before. Wolfe's trick worked? Perhaps weapons are an important way of connecting Agia with other characters. It all starts with the avern seed.

Agia also uses a crooked dagger in Casdoe's house. And at the Saltus mine she uses the athame (I think) which (I think the appendix tells us) is the "poisoned warlock's sword".

I think the assassin is just a way to tell us that Agia's malice continued, in one form or another, all through the time Severian was on his trip.

-bsharp

b sharp — 31 May 2006, 18:01 · follows b sharp

Hm. now that I think about it, the assassin was masked, right? Agia would have been very old and Severian has been known to make mistakes before. Then there is always the Path of Air...

-bsharp

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 31 May 2006, 18:48 · in reply to b sharp

Actually, I took the mask to suggest that the assassin was a disaffected member of the Order of Seekers for Truth and Penitence who did not approve of the Autarch Severian's reform of his guild.

On 5/31/06, b sharp <bsharpoflat at hotmail.com> wrote:
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-bsharp

Roy C. Lackey — 31 May 2006, 22:43 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

bsharp wrote:
Hm. now that I think about it, the assassin was masked, right? Agia would have been very old and Severian has been known to make mistakes before.

Then

there is always the Path of Air...

Uh, no, the assassin didn't have a mask of any kind. And Severian specifically mentions seeing the guy's face as it reanimated. The assassin had a batardeau, which is a large knife. (URTH, 291) I can't see that Agia had anything to do with the assassin.

-Roy

b sharp — 01 Jun 2006, 04:14 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Dan'l said:

Actually, I took the mask to suggest that the assassin was a disaffected member of the Order of Seekers for Truth and Penitence who did not approve of the Autarch Severian's reform of his guild.

So I checked, Roy is right, no mask. Still, my point remains that only two poisoned weapons appear in the 5 books, that I can think of. One with Agia, the athame, and one with the assassin (venom-daubed batardeau). Agia's weapons seem to connect her to others. Or maybe not.

I guess that is the question, to connect the dots or not connect the dots.

Exploring for this post reminded me of another weapon she doesn't actually have but she mentions owning previously, "A misericorde with an ivy-root handle". I find that a misericorde is a thin bladed dagger used on the battlefield to put the mortally wounded out of their misery. Ivy root, hm...

I'm not seeing a strong connection of that weapon to anything else in the story. Pelerines maybe? It seems like a rather elaborate weapon description for the reference to be just a toss-away.

-bsharp