

Citadel things: In the crypt and Valeria

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 28 Aug 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4700>

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junk06 at amalar.com — 28 Aug 2006, 02:46

I have puzzled together most of the series to be satisfied, but a few things have never clicked for me.

Does Severian get in the crypt in the citadel? It seems to be clear he is there. I trace his timeline, and it's clear he's remade at some points, but when does he end up in the crypt? Even at the end of BOTNS, it is mentioned he thinks he will end up there, but then ends up going to the time after the new sun past the time of the guy in the crypt. I don't see any extraneous Severian that is not accounted for.

What is the significance of Valeria? He meets her very soon in the first book, then suddenly goes off to look for her at the end of the last book as if it were the end of some literary story arc. Is she mentioned any time in between briefly meeting her and when he goes to find her to marry her? He met some other women briefly too, but didn't go back to marry them. Why her?

b sharp — 28 Aug 2006, 11:16 · follows junk06 at amalar.com

junk06 asks:

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Severian does meet Valeria early on then fails to mention her much until the end. He mentions her after he has collected a few female conquests and then starts to replay them in his mind on occasions. It always struck me as awkward that a casual afternoon tea suddenly became as significant as Severian's relationship with the other women. I've even thought the few remembrances of Valeria seem like post hoc additions to the story by Wolfe so Sev's marriage to Valeria won't seem quite so abrupt and strange at the end.

Wolfe's (Sev's) descriptions of Valeria are so tender I've always felt there was something autobiographical there. I often think Severian marries Valeria because Gene Wolfe married Rosemary (I think that's the name).

Junk06 also asks:

Does Severian get in the crypt in the citadel?

Just my own theory, but I don't think he does. Old gods never die, they just fade away.

My current view on the mausoleum is that the five coffins invoke the five heads of Cerberus and this is Gene Wolfe's way of putting himself in the story, recognizing Severian as another (the second) of his literary avatars.

The funeral bronze that looks like Severian is really Wolfe's face and this is a cameo appearance.

-bsharp