

Thecla's Green Book

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 15 Oct 2006

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thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 15 Oct 2006, 06:53

Probably been pointed out before, but Wolfe seems to have made a slip juggling his books. When Sev gets the 3 volumes from Cyby, the green book is "no thicker than my index finger" and "hardly larger than my hand" - in other words, unusually small, and presumably the smallest of the lot. But when he delivers the books to Thecla, both it and the saffian (heraldry) book are too wide to fit through the slot in her door.

Roy C. Lackey — 16 Oct 2006, 05:27 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Andrew wrote:

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I'm glad you brought this up. I was going to post about it but didn't. It wasn't until I read "Books in _The Book of the New Sun_" in PE, then looked at the two places in the text you mention, plus the part where Severian visited Thecla's cell and took the brown book just before leaving for exile, that I was able to sort it all out. I don't think Wolfe made a mistake; he was just being particularly devious.

Wolfe was trying to say as little as he could get away with about _The Book of the New Sun_. There is only one oblique mention of it in NEW SUN, and that only by a process of elimination, and even then he muddled the waters. The problem resolves itself when you finally realize there are **two** green books.

One of them is the smallest book of all, the green one about the size of a man's hand, the book of theology with the devotions and enameled pictures. The brown book was "hardly larger" than the little green book. These are the two books that fit through the cell door.

The smaller of the two remaining books that are too wide to fit through the slot is also green. That one is _The Book of the New Sun_. The other is the much larger folio with the arms on the cover.

That essay makes it absolutely clear that the theology book with the pictures is **not** _The Book of the New Sun_. Therefore, there are two green books.

-Roy