

Catherine, Cyriaca and baby Severian

The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 20 Oct 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4741>

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b sharp — 20 Oct 2006, 13:44

Regarding Catherine, Roy writes:

I think it would be rather strange that the torture and death of a woman who looked just like the >maid who annually played Holy Katharine would have gone unnoticed and unmentioned by >Severian and every other member of the guild. Besides, the torturers buried their "clients in the >lower reaches of the necropolis". The woman whose body was taken by Vodalus was buried >higher up the hill, among the statuary.

Apprentices routinely asked older journeymen about their parentage but were told little. If Severian's mother had escaped from the torturers and then was returned 20 years later for execution then we can be sure it would be kept secret, especially from Severian. Severian doesn't recognize the woman in the coffin as a client. Perhaps it was a private torture/execution conducted by Master Gurloes as directed by the voices he talks to at the top of the tower.

Is Roy is arguing that the woman in the coffin isn't a torture client because of where she is buried? Are we to think that Thecla was buried down in the lower reaches of the necropolis? Exultants were usually buried in private mausoleums. Where would you bury an exultant who was missing for 20 years then secretly tortured to death? I think the upper level of the necropolis is a good compromise.

If Catherine did escape from the torturers, who helped her? I'm tempted to say Palaemon. It would explain why he was banished from the guild for a while and why he is so attached to Severian. Roy's dratted time frame arguments stand in the way, unfortunately. Winnoc says he was flogged by Journeyman Palaemon 30 years previously. I don't think Severian is 30 and even using time travel and Path Of Air devices I can't make the scenario work. I still like it, however ;-) so I wouldn't mind if someone can make it work.

on Cyriaca, Roy writes:

I just don't see any text-based connection that links Cyriaca with the twins, but there are some >things that weigh against a connection. Cyriaca was apparently a postulant traveling in the >southern part of the country with the Pelerines at her time of menarche. Sometime in her last >year with them before making her final commitment, she ran away from the order (sound familiar?) >and went home. The Pelerine outfit she wore to the archon's party still fit her, so she must have >been full grown when she left the order. So she must have spent several years with them.

Wolfe has made it clear that Thecla's four books are clues. I consider Agia's four weapons to be parallel to that. Two of them (athame and lucivee) connect her to the sorcerer's cult. The other two I believe connect her to Cyriaca. They are the crooked blade of Thrax and the misericorde (battlefield mercy killing blade, a Pelerine tool I think).

Cyriaca says she could be Severian's mother if she conceived him a year or two after it was possible. If Agia is a few years younger than Severian then Cyriaca conceiving twins soon after

leaving the Pelerines is in the proper time frame. Cyriaca left the Pelerines because she wanted to be with men so a pregnancy isn't surprising. Cyriaca is currently used to being served by maids but she tells Severian she can dress hair and sew. Perhaps she learned these skills as a postulant but it might suggest her high status was acquired later in life. If her home was Nessus, it can be imagined that an armiger visiting from Thrax "rescues" her from a dreary life as a used clothing shop girl and brings her north to his estate, only to treat her cruelly thereafter. Borski has suggested Sieur Racho, who often visits Nessus, for this role. Her baby twins are then left in Nessus to be raised by the shopowner, surrogate mother, Grandma, who later dies and bequeaths the shop to Agia and Agilus. Being from a shopkeeper family of the optimate class, Cyriaca could have gained entrance to the Pelerines, as Ava did. Cyriaca maintains a secret correspondence with a Pelerine friend. Perhaps with her daughter also.

I think Roy makes a good argument for Severian not being born in the Citadel but rather arriving as a small child. He worries about the nursing in a cell memory conflicting with the memory of playing with pebbles. In a non-baby formula/baby food society, it is likely a child would still be nursing at an age old enough to play with pebbles so I think those two memories are compatible.

I will take issue with this statement:

Early on, Severian said that his earliest recollection was of "piling pebbles in the Old Yard." That >isn't true, and he knew it wasn't true when he wrote it.

We know that Severian's memories are not actually perfect. That may have been the earliest memory he had at that point in his life in the story. He is able to add memories later in the story when properly stimulated (the mandragora and Thecla are very intrusive stimulations). Severian manages to add a vague memory of his mother and nursing in a cell and feels elated, "at having reached back at last to her, after so many fruitless attempts." There is no mention of Severa in these added memories but I'll forever wonder about Thecla being added to his pebble piling memory.

-bsharp

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 20 Oct 2006, 17:31 · in reply to b sharp

Okay, here's a side note on the "Who played Katherine?" question...

Recall the attitudes people have towards the torturers. Where are they going to find a woman who willingly works with them, year after year?

And a woman who can apparently be beheaded without dying?

Now, think about Jonas.....

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you walk into an open sewer and die.

- Mel Brooks

Roy C. Lackey — 20 Oct 2006, 21:50 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

bsharp quoted and wrote:

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who looked just like the >maid who annually played Holy Katharine would have gone unnoticed and unmentioned by >Severian and every other member of the guild. Besides, the torturers buried their "clients in the >lower reaches of the necropolis". The woman whose body was taken by Vodalus was buried >higher up the hill, among the statuary.

Apprentices routinely asked older journeymen about their parentage but were told little. If Severian's mother had escaped from the torturers and then was returned 20 years later for execution then we can be sure it would be kept secret, especially from Severian. Severian doesn't recognize the woman in the coffin as a client.

Neither did he recognize her as the maid who played Holy Katharine, which he could hardly have failed to do.

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Exultants weren't usually buried in the necropolis at all. They were buried on their private estates. Thus, there would not have existed any family plot or mausoleum to bury her in on the hill.

Cyriaca says she could be Severian's mother if she conceived him a year or two after it was possible. If Agia is a few years younger than Severian then Cyriaca conceiving twins soon after leaving the Pelerines is in the proper time frame. Cyriaca left the Pelerines because she wanted to be with men so a pregnancy isn't surprising.

Agia said she was 23, which would make Severian about 25. If those ages are correct, that would make Cyriaca about 40, if she wasn't lying.

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Severian's manuscript was not a daily journal or diary. He wrote it all ten years after the events related in it. The nursing memory came to him on the same night that Jolenta was wounded and Juturna paid him a visit in the Cephissus river. The mandragora incident happened on his first night in the Citadel after returning as autarch. He had already experienced both memories ten years before he wrote the piling pebbles sentence.

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 21 Oct 2006, 07:10 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Dan'I wrote:

Okay, here's a side note on the "Who played Katherine?" question...

Recall the attitudes people have towards the torturers. Where are they going to find a woman who willingly works with them, year after year?

And a woman who can apparently be beheaded without dying?

Now, think about Jonas.....

Okay, I'll bite. A friggin' 'female' android as Holy Katharine? Are you serious? That would really screw up Severian's family tree. <g>

While checking a spelling just now, I took note of Severian's persistence in referring to the female as a "maid" when he recounted his own elevation feast -- ten times in about three pages. My old _Webster's_ first definition of maid is: "1. a) a girl or young unmarried woman. b) a virgin."

I don't know why I never noticed it before, but that many references to a "maid" is hard to dismiss. Minimally, it suggests that, if Ouen got Catherine pregnant and she was Severian's mother, she can't be the maid in the ceremonies.

Where do they grow those damn khaibits anyway? And what does the khaibit get out of the deal?

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 21 Oct 2006, 12:33 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

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I can't say it's without textev, given Hethor's paracoita speech.

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I'm telling you, she must be mom's khaibit du jour.

Where do they grow those damn khaibits anyway?

The witches' tower.

And what does the khaibit get
out of the deal?

pampered existence, similar to the recent _The Island_

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