

Katharine maid redux

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 02 Nov 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4763>

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b sharp — 02 Nov 2006, 18:31

Dan'l posts:

If Sev's mother (as I think most of us agree) was handed over to the torturers for excruciation and (eventual) death, then the Maid who plays Katherine _isn't_ Sev's mother, putting an end to, at least, that line of speculation.

I thought the Katharine maid thread of last month developed a pretty good theory on this which you might have missed?. Roy suggested Catherine was an exultant and the maid her kaibit. Someone else (DD Jones?) proposed a series of kaibits, accounting for her unchanging looks.

Someone suggested the maid's head really is cut off each year, but the stage sword is "no more than a wooden batten provided with an old hilt and brightened with tinsel" and the head is identified to be wax many times, plus the maid emerges with her head attached soon after the faux chop.

I am convinced the woman Severian sees on the Path of Air is Catherine. Severian can't understand why he seems to recognize her but is more confused about how she seems to recognize him. His resemblance to Ouen could explain it. This woman's oval face suggests the Pelerines, her "raven" hair and dark complexion is just like the maid's. Her dark hair and pale gown are mirrored in the woman Severian sees in the coffin (again, Severian doesn't recognize someone out of context).

In Talos' distorted play, I think Contessa Carina is a distortion of Chatelaine Catherine, making the woman an exultant. Allowing the maid to be a kaibit explains her lesser stature. There are suggestions that Catherine, the woman on the Path of Air, Contessa Carina, the maid and the woman in the coffin all have been sentenced to (real or fictional) torture. I still like the idea of younger Palaemon helping Catherine escape to the Path of Air, explaining his exile and his attachment to Severian.

I seem to be alone in these sorts of perceptions, but perhaps that is more reason for me to be so annoyingly redundant. To me this is a similar case to that of Father Inire. Usually we think of solving mystery identities by deducing, $X = A$. I think in these two cases unseen characters Catherine and Inire can only be identified by deducing $X = A + B + C + D$. Leaving out any element results in an incomplete equation but together they add up (for me anyway). Some doubts are assuaged by the transparent multiple identities of the old Autarch. Wolfe seems to be thinking along these lines.

"Someday they'll want us" ;-)

-bsharp

Mo Holkar / UKG — 03 Nov 2006, 10:03 · in reply to b sharp

Apologies if this has been covered before -- I had a hunt through the archives, but couldn't see any reference to it.

Has anyone read the recent Robert Borski, *The Long and the Short of It*? -- Amazon are offering it to me as an ideal companion for *Soldier of Sidon*. I've read *Solar Labyrinth*, which I found kind of a mix of interesting ideas with some rather tiresome (eg. the cryptonymics).

best,

Mo

Roy C. Lackey — 03 Nov 2006, 19:38 · follows Mo Holkar / UKG

Mo Holkar wrote:

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Only one of the essays really touches on the first two *SOLDIER* books, if that's what you wanted to know. The rest is similar to *SL*, but isn't concentrated on the *Urth Cycle*.

-Roy

James Crossley — 03 Nov 2006, 21:12 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 11/3/06 11:38 AM, "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

Mo Holkar wrote:

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Only one of the essays really touches on the first two *SOLDIER* books, if that's what you wanted to know. The rest is similar to *SL*, but isn't concentrated on the *Urth Cycle*.

In a way, I find Borski's second book more interesting. By the end of *SL*, it being all about *Urth*, I felt that the presentation of some interesting ideas was turning into theory-flogging. <*The Long & the Short*> covers many more texts, so there's less time for the reader to feel that there's a unified field Wolfe theory to be oversold.

I'm just glad, really, that there's some Wolfe-related criticism in print. Not that the online discussions are less valid, but it's tremendously pleasing to see some actual books on Wolfe sitting on my LitCrit shelf near names like Melville and Perec.

James