

Severian's Sexuality

The Urth list — 4 messages, 2 voices, 07 Jun 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5045>

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b sharp — 07 Jun 2008, 04:47

I'm in the camp which perceives Severian far more guilty of withholding details of his sexuality rather than embellishing them in his story. Heck, it takes him four books of sprinkling hints to finally admit he had sex with Thecla. He doesn't seem too prideful about his other "conquests".

He is most open and graphic in describing his sexual interactions with Dorcas but can never specifically commit to print that she is his grandmother. It also seems to me (sorry I know this is sacrilegious to some) that Wolfe gives Severian occasional homoerotic and even pedophilic thoughts. Naturally these embarrassments are also disguised but I think they are there.

In a related vein, I was recently contemplating Wolfe describing Jolenta's pubic hair as a "newly hatched chick". I always thought it seemed an odd, jarring metaphor. I considered that it supports Borski's guess...showing us that Jolenta's real hair color (hidden by Wolfe earlier) is pale gold, like her grandmother, Dorcas, and that her real name might be Severa. The sexual congress between Severian and Dorcas, Dorcas and Jolenta, Agia and Agilus (his cousins I think), and Severian and Cyriaca (his aunt I think) is what leads me to think of this as an Oedipally cursed family.

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jun 2008, 05:08 · in reply to b sharp

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Jolenta is his sister? Cyriaca is his aunt? Agia and Agilus are his cousins?

Is there any evidence for any of this in the book?

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b sharp — 07 Jun 2008, 14:12 · follows brunians at brunians.org

Brunian asks:

Jolenta is his sister? Cyriaca is his aunt? Agia and Agilus are his cousins?

Is there any evidence for any of this in the book?

I don't know!!! I think so. And I'm not alone in that. But maybe that's just because I/ we were looking for evidence. From my first readings of this series I felt we were meant to identify members of Severian's family. For those who don't perceive that challenge the evidence will seem circumstantial or even manufactured. And Wolfe ain't tellin'.

Few debate the conclusion that Ouen is Severian's father and Dorcas his grandmother. But it is never stated openly in the book.

I think maybe it was Clute who deduced that the maid who plays St.

Katharine is Severian's mother Catherine, whose face looks like a pool of still water (mirror) to Severian.

As far as I know it was Borski who figured Agia and Agilus to be his cousins. He makes a good case that Dorcas died in childbirth long after Ouen was born, giving Severian an aunt or uncle, so why not cousins. Severian is a twin so perhaps his cousins are also. The incest between Agia and Agilus might connect

them to Severian and Dorcas' family. Perhaps the sexual attraction between Agia and Severian also. The golden aureole Wolfe keeps giving A and A could be a connection to Dorcas.

Borski sees the prisoner who nails children's feet to the floor as Severian's aunt. I think Cyriaca is a much better candidate. She is the right age and height. She shares a dark aureole of hair and an oval face with Catherine. They both escaped from the Pelerines. The Oedipal incest theme ties in nicely. Moreover, Cyriaca is comfortable escaping to Nessus, where she can cook and sew (Agia and Agilus ran a used clothing shop in Nessus their mother had owned). Agia possesses knowledge and accoutrements (scarlet cape and misericorde) associated with the Pelerines.

Jolenta might be the best candidate for his sister, Severa because SOMEBODY has to be Severa. She is the right age and height. She has hair color like Dorcas, but that and her real name are suspiciously hidden when Severian first meets her. There is the incest tie-in. Jolenta could have been a witch who left her guild like Severian (though perhaps Merryn and the Cumaean would have mentioned it..or maybe not).

There is evidence for other family members as well, but where do you draw the line of skepticism? Wolfe leaves things in a way which allows a reader the range from dismissing even Dorcas as a family member through accepting the possibility of even more than I've mentioned.

(I could hint at [grand] Father Inire but perhaps we need not have that can of worms opened ;-).

-bsharp

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jun 2008, 15:56 · in reply to b sharp

I am extremely skeptical about all of this.

If Wolfe intended any of it, there would be better and more solid clues, like the ones linking Severian, Ouen and Dorcas.

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Windows Live? Messenger. Learn how.
https://www.invite2messenger.net/im/?source=TXT_EML_WLH_LearnHow
