

"Myfather's mountedguard"

The Urth list — 7 messages, 5 voices, 14 Oct 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5184>

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Son of Witz — 14 Oct 2008, 21:26

-----Original Message-----

From: Duncan Truter [mailto:dtruter at gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2008 02:20 PM

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) "My father's mounted guard"

he reveals in UOTNS that he's not just Severian and Thecla, but equally the eunuch autarch and all of his predecessors. maybe there's someone else here other than Severian or Thecla?

Duncan

Sure, it would seem that everyone he absorbed, via Thecla or Autarch is capable of coloring his memory. I'm curious if anyone has identified other instances of this.

John Watkins — 14 Oct 2008, 21:33 · in reply to Son of Witz

It's my impression that the Severian and Thecla personalities and memories are far more prominent. Neither the old Autarch nor his predecessors had either the Claw, which made Thecla "alive" in Severian, nor Severian's eidetic memory, so the old Autarch's memories of Autarchs past would be dim and imperfect compared to Severian's Thecla-memories.

Certainly Thecla asserts herself in Severian in ways that the others do not, or rather, certainly Severian records Thecla's moments of self-assertion in ways he does not record such moments for others. But that could be in keeping with his general reticence about the old Autarch, whose name Severian surely knew.

On 10/14/08, Son of Witz <sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

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Son of Witz — 14 Oct 2008, 22:50 · follows John Watkins

-----Original Message-----

From: John Watkins [mailto:john.watkins04 at gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2008 02:33 PM

To: 'The Urth Mailing List'

Subject: Re: (urth) "Myfather's mountedguard"

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That makes a lot of sense as to why it is always Thecla and not the other memory characters we notice.

Jeff Wilson — 15 Oct 2008, 03:00 · in reply to Son of Witz

Son of Witz wrote:

-----Original Message-----

From: John Watkins [mailto:john.watkins04 at gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2008 02:33 PM

To: 'The Urth Mailing List'

Subject: Re: (urth) "Myfather's mountedguard"

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Sev specifically says that the previous autarchs' memories are present but faint, only his immediate predecessor and Thecla are "there" enough to have initiative and identity of their own. I don't think the Claw would make a big difference, since Sev is the ultimately the source of the Claw's power. If anything, the conciliatory aspect of the Claw would have more of an integrating, assimilative effect, granting peace from such an internal division.

As for more Thecla-moments being recorded, that's largely because Thecla is the only passenger memory available for 2 1/2 volumes, with the a tiny snippet of Autarch-memory at the end of Volume IV. By the time URTH begins, Sev's already had ten years of time to adjust, so there's just not as much opportunity for other such takeovers to be recorded. Although, by

the time Sev returns to the Citadel, he is speaking in the plural as more than just a royal affectation, as if the collective autarchs are speaking through him.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

Son of Witz — 15 Oct 2008, 22:48 · follows Jeff Wilson

My real point was to address the original thrust of this thread, which has been the subject of much debate and spawned some rather fanciful theories.

Thecla's father had a villa up north on the frontier. The Old Autarch fathered neither Severian nor Thecla. Ouen was Severian's father. Thecla's father died before Severian even met her. Waiter Ouen certainly never commanded a mounted guard. The Old Autarch had been a servant in the House Absolute. It is very unlikely that a lowly servant's father commanded a mounted guard; still less likely to have done so when Thecla was a little girl. So the father in the sentence in question must refer to Thecla's father.

-Roy

Roy, et al,
thanks for addressing the questions, and thanks for providing relevant quotes.

Roy, yes, that was the thrust of my question, but it was curiosity, not something to prove. I've definitely come to think this is the 'correct' reading.

b sharp — 20 Oct 2008, 19:41 · follows Son of Witz

"I played again with pebbles in the court-yard beside the fallen curtain wall, as Thecla dodged the hooves of my father's mounted guard."

I think everyone is being rather cavalier with this passage by contorting it into making sense; to jibe with what we feel we know. I prefer to read the passage literally and let it serve as a hint for what we don't know. Wolfe separates Severian's and Thecla's memories in the full version of this passage with the word, "again". This sentence is not separated, thus I take it as a memory of Severian's, remembering playing together with Thecla when they were children.

Roy takes pains to note that Severian's father is Ouen, but this is merely a biological relationship, unknown and unimportant to either of them until the end of CotA. As a very young child, perhaps Severian can dredge up a memory from before he was given over to the torturers. If Catherine was married to (and had run away from) a guy who commanded a mounted guard, voila. Yes, she told Ouen she ran from an order of monials but that sounds better to tell her boyfriend than that she is running away from a husband. And it seems more likely that a commander would send the authorities to find and collect a runaway wife and send her to torturers (Severian says as much in a conversation with Cyriaca). Why would an order of monials do all that?

Roy also discusses Thecla's formative years growing up at the villa in the north. Not sure if he remembers my annoying dictionary post from a couple years ago:

villa- 1: a country estate

2: the rural or suburban residence of a wealthy person

Why would Wolfe make such a strong point that it is a "villa" which is mainly defined as a

secondary residence for the wealthy. What is the family's primary residence? I propose it could be the Citadel itself. Catherine seems to have been in residence there in one way or another and this could make Severian's non-biological, cuckolded father the Castellan and perhaps hints that Thecla is his sister. Using Borski's ideas, he did have sex with Thecla and the Castellan is lame, marking them as family members.

In my current frame of mind I don't really think Thecla is Severian's sister. But perhaps this was meant as a not-quite-red but pink herring by Wolfe. There is evidence Merryn is Severian's sister. There is evidence Jolenta is his sister. There is evidence Pia is his sister, etc. Perhaps Wolfe's intention was to pepper the story with half-clues about Severian's family to obtain a Proustian sense of ambiguous identity for the poor guy. I dunno. But I think there is more to this passage than just jumbled memories.

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Roy C. Lackey — 21 Oct 2008, 04:23 · in reply to b sharp

b sharp wrote:

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Some inconvenient facts:

1) Thecla was an exultant. The exultants are a closed caste, meaning one must be *born* to it, of exultant parents.

2) The lame (and still living) Castellan was not an exultant.

3) Thecla's father had given a ball for her each year until he *died*.

But I've said all this before.

-Roy