

"Myfather's mounted guard"

The Urth list — 8 messages, 6 voices, 18 Nov 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5226>

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Son of Witz — 18 Nov 2008, 18:34

I just read Borski's solar labyrinth article on Thecla.

My Father's Mounted Guard.

Her Father is the Autarch.

seems pretty viable to me, and a lot more interesting than the mundane answer.

While I've got some serious qualms about the nature of Borski's investigations, they do make for some interesting ideas. Thecla and Masks of the Father stand out as very useful to unlocking the book.

what are my qualms then?:

just that most of the added details only add to the plowman's meaning and add very little to the soothsayers' or transcendental meanings. This book is like what Dorcas says about the floating cathedral (It is the Cathedral of the Claw that jumps into the air when it's set afire, right?) She says "It

seems to me that what you call the third meaning is very clear. But the second meaning is harder to find, and the first, which ought to be the easiest, is impossible." So, I guess since the first meaning is so difficult, Borski should be commended for connecting the breadcrumb trails with some neon paint.

However I can't help but feel that what Wolfe wanted us to take away was the third and second meanings, and he used the ambiguity of the first to lead us further than plot. I'm not sure where to credit it, but an esoteric teaching I've heard is "there is no escape through the horizontal" and I would argue that most of these readings leave us wandering in the labyrinth. I find the transcendental readings, the vertical dimension, lead us out of the labyrinth and into even MORE interesting territory than the labyrinth of incestuous time warped bloodlines and religio-political manipulation.

Using time warped incestuous bloodlines as an example, what is more important — that Severian might be his wife's grandchild? (Valeria as mother of Catherine theory) — that he was potentially many Severian's resurrected? (the empty coffins) — OR — that his life is a loop? I would argue that Wolfe is elusive on these details because what matters is that his life is a Loop, because it gets into the larger notion of Death and Resurrection and cyclical universes, the metaphor of the Amphisbaena. The mechanics of how his life is a loop are just details that get us there.

I do find the puzzles fascinating. But as someone mentioned that in an interview, even Wolfe doesn't know who Severa is. I would say it's not nailed down because it's not very important to the meaning of the story.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 18 Nov 2008, 18:38 · in reply to Son of Witz

Ummmm ... the Autarch supposedly has no children.

On Tue, Nov 18, 2008 at 10:34 AM, Son of Witz <sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:
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Son of Witz — 18 Nov 2008, 19:36 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

From: Dan'l Danehy-Oakes [mailto:danldo at gmail.com]

Ummmm ... the Autarch supposedly has no children.

It's not my theory, it's Borski's, from Solar Labyrinth, and the text seems to support it. He's talking about before his unmaning. The text says she was born in the house absolute and destined to sit on the throne. The Autarch's personal cat headed servants recognize her through Severian, why would that be if she's just some noble. Can you find any text that supports that the Autarch did NOT have children.

I'm not arguing FOR his conclusion, just that it is very compelling and I've not yet seen a contradiction. The date of the unmanning of Appian is probably crucial here. How much older is Thecla? How long back was Appian unmanned?

<sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>wrote:

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aaron — 19 Nov 2008, 00:57 · in reply to Son of Witz

If his name is really Appian. Again, there is no evidence either way.

On Tue, Nov 18, 2008 at 2:36 PM, Son of Witz <sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>wrote:
From: Dan'I Danehy-Oakes [mailto:danldo at gmail.com]

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<sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>wrote:

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Roy C. Lackey — 19 Nov 2008, 06:26 · in reply to Son of Witz

Son of Witz quoted and wrote:
From: Dan'I Danehy-Oakes [mailto:danldo at gmail.com]

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As for the issue of the Old Autarch being Thecla's father -- he cannot be her or Thea's biological father, as I've said before, and recently. It's this simple: Thecla is an exultant; the Old Autarch is

decidedly not. He is a little guy, scarcely taller than Cyriaca. One must be *born* an exultant, of exultant stock. See the first appendix to CLAW.

One born of the mating of an exultant and common person is taller than the average commoner, but notably shorter than an exultant. A person of such mixture is regarded as a bastard, such as the fat guy outside Agilus' cell.

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He was unmanned not too long before Severian was born, then opened the whorehouse about the same year Sev was born. See chapter XXIV, CITADEL.

The best determination I can make of Thecla's age is that she is a little older than Sev, but not a lot older. Maybe 23-25.

-Roy

Mo Holkar / UKG — 19 Nov 2008, 08:31 · in reply to Son of Witz

At 18:34 18/11/2008, Son of Witz wrote:

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Just to pick up on your larger point here, I feel the same way -- although Wolfe unhelpfully blurs the issue by including some plot puzzles that _are_ important to the higher meanings (eg Dorcas's identity). So it's easy to get step-by-step drawn into deeper and deeper puzzling over implied or possible layers of meaning concealed within arcana of plot, in the hope that a discovered correspondence may shed a new light on something important.

I guess a (playful) comparison might be made with Church history. Some theologians back-calculate the date of Creation and determine the numbers of angels that can fit in various places, while others are only interested in the revealed Word of the Gospels. Wolfeanism is too young to have yet had a Reformation, but give it a few hundred years...

Mo

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WolfeWiki now at:

<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/>

Dave Tallman — 19 Nov 2008, 11:38 · in reply to Son of Witz

Son of Witz wrote:

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In UotNS, it says that the old autarch was unmanned specifically so that no child would stand in Sev's way to the throne. But in this version Thecla would already be standing in the way.

I note that Thecla's destiny did come true, in an ironic sort of way. She did sit on the throne -- in Severian.

Son of Witz — 19 Nov 2008, 16:17 · in reply to Dave Tallman

On Nov 19, 2008, at 3:38 AM, Dave Tallman wrote:

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Borski argues that's why Thecla was ultimately given to the torturers. He thinks Inire did it.