

# Violet = Plutonium

The Urth list — 13 messages, 7 voices, 13 Nov 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6110>

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Andrew Mason — 13 Nov 2011, 22:23

David Stockhoff wrote:

It's one thing if Orchid hired a chem to pleasure chem guests the way a brothel might hire boys and girls for different tastes (although apparently she did not hire boys).

I don't think chems have anything like what we would call sex. The only thing that disqualifies a chem from seeing the gods is actually making a child, which takes a year.

The councillors were never very convincing as humans---Patera Quetzal kept his secret longer. Lemur reveals his status almost as soon as we meet him. None of the Ayuntamiento ever went out in public anyway, so they had little need to work at fooling anyone and if they did it's not shown.

Lemur has served under two Caldes. That surely puts his rise to power earlier than that of Quetzal. And I take it he deceived them, and the various commissioners through who he governed.

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Lee Berman — 14 Nov 2011, 13:49 · follows Andrew Mason

James Wynn: The tricky part for the councilors was connecting the chems consciousness to the the living councilors. This is easier to do than it might appear because (I propose) chems were made to receive the scanned, memory wiped souls of bios just as the Mainframe is received the scanned souls of Typhon's family and inner court.

I think this is a reasonable supposition. Chems have such individualized personalities. It doesn't seem like an efficient way to make a tool in this manner.

I wonder if this might apply to BotNS. Why would the factory want to program Jonas to read fiction during his off hours? This is in contrast to Sidero who is more clearly a tool. While he has emotions, I can't imagine him reading Greek mythology or Lewis Carroll.

Has there been any mention of the word choice for the nickname Plutonium? Of all the mineral names which might be chosen that is surely one with significance. Did the talus run on fossil or organic fuel? I forget, but surely Chems don't.

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Gerry Quinn — 14 Nov 2011, 14:12 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: Lee Berman

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Soldiers, at least, are said to have a nuclear fusion power source.  
And Crane says that isotopes are released when a chem blows, not specifying the type of chem, indicating some kind of nuclear power at least.  
- Gerry Quinn

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James Wynn — 14 Nov 2011, 14:20 · in reply to Lee Berman

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Lee Berman wrote:

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The chems also wear perfume and the original chem owner of Rose's hand used to "practice her hand". There is a practical reason for them to smell and judge good smells (the females anyway), because they have to cook. But this is a convenient way to accomplish the judging part.

Until now, I did not apply this to Jonas. It seemed unlikely that Wolfe would have thought of this method and done so little with it until the mid 90s. Now I'm not so sure. This might explain how Jonas "becomes" Miles. In truth (according to this theory), Miles *\*will\** become Jonas. Severian's speech to Jonas will be in Jonas's subconscious and sometime after he leaves Sev, he remembers it and does not return. On the other hand, it might be simpler to propose that Jonas is made from what is left of Miles's biological parts, and as with Chelle's new arm in "Home Fires" those parts remember.

J.

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Lee Berman — 14 Nov 2011, 15:17 · follows James Wynn

David Stockhoff: Lee's comment suggests to me that, since plutonium is never otherwise mentioned but may well be the source of chem energy (i.e., they have nuclear powerplants in the mode of Iron Man's suit), that Sand may be calling Violet something like "my heart." Whether that is flirty or an expression of true love I don't know.

Yes, that's good! Just the track I was onto. I was stuck on plutonium as radioactive fuel, so all I could think of by way of analogy was, "my little chili pepper" or something like that. Plutonium as "my heart" works quite nicely for an atomic powered being.

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David Stockhoff — 14 Nov 2011, 15:21 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 11/14/2011 10:17 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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And it underscores chems as "people," always a concern of Wolfe's.

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Sergei SOLOVIEV — 14 Nov 2011, 20:26 · in reply to Lee Berman

Sergei Soloviev:

The discussion about "Violet = Plutonium" went quite far, but I think again this guess (that she is a chem) is hardly supported by the text. The idea that she is an agent of Trivigauntis is not supported either.

"EftLS" ("Lovers"). Chenille calls Orchid via monitor:

"... I need a favor, only there'll be something for you. Maybe a card. Maybe more." "... you see the mort in doss in the next room? She's the Trivigaunti's generalissimo. Her name is Siyuf." "... I got to bet the hoof. Is Violet riding pretty light?" "... Siyuf likes tall dells, she would've given me five easy.... Violet ought to get more if she soaps her. Tell her to come uphill and play spoons, tell Siyuf she's my pal ..." " Only I get half."

"EftLS" (I'm Auk")

Chenille calls Silk to the "Ermine's".

(Violet told her where Silk and Hyacinth are.)

"... so I talked to Violet some myself (after she was with Siyuf)."

"So it pops out that Trivigauntis caught a flier..."

"Only you didn't know they killed three, did you? Three fliers. That's what Siyuf said, Violet says."

"... Violet figured it might be good to know where this flier was. You know, something somebody might pay to know." "... And Violet spilled something about me and Auk, Patera, just making conversation, she says, with Siyuf. She says as soon as she said Auk's name Siyuf wanted to know all about him. ... Violet think Auk's mixed with this flier somehow, and now the Trvigauntis are looking for him..."

Does it look as if she is an agent of Trivigauntis? It is just "call girl" who does her work and wants her piece of cake.

Does it look as if she is a chem? To deceive Chenille, Orchid, other girls? No chems visiting Orchid!

We have again a hotly discussed theory based on scant evidence. : (

If we look at the Sand's visit to Siyuf:

"a tall and strikingly handsome brunette in a diaphanous gown peered out. (It is Violet.) 'Hi. You want to see Generalissimo Siyuf?'" "You got it, Plutonium" ... "The handsome young woman nodded. 'Close enough, Soldier. I'm Violet.'" "Sergeant Sand, pleased." ... "Leaning over Violet's shoulder, Hammerstone ponted with a finger thrice the size of hers. 'I don't really read so good', she whispered. 'What's that second word? It can't - Sweetheart, there's a Chenille in here. Is that the Chen we know?'"

I would think the chems are not illiterate. Violet calls Hammerstone sweetheart - but it doesn't mean he is a Bio. I think Wolfe merely renders the style of chat - both of Violet and soldiers.

Later Sand says (about Bison and Mint) : "Colonel Bison's General Mint's man. If she says spit oil, he says how far?" Does it mean that Bison is a chem? Again just argot (soldiers style).

"As Abanja face faded to gray, Violet murmured, 'I'd help if I could, only -' 'Sure, Plutonium.' Slinging his slug gun, Sand stooped, grasped an astonished Siyuf about the waist..."

Sand is able to be sarcastic, ne c'est pas?

I really think that many of the theories we discuss here are like skyscrapers built on sand

All the best

Sergei Soloviev

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David Stockhoff — 14 Nov 2011, 20:52 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

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Sergei Soloviev

Well, not entirely. First, we are not building skyscrapers but rather imagining what they might look like and how they might be built. I don't think Violet is a chem either, but if not, why not?

Second, as an employee of Orchid's---and a big girl to boot, "second tallest" in fact---Violet is already a spy suspect before she happily gets into bed with Siyuf. Having her be a chem too probably complicates the situation too much.

Violet calling Hammerstone "sweetheart" means little in a prostitute. Calling someone you know by a completely different name---one that violates the known naming conventions, as "Plutonium" does---is a little different.

Good point about Violet being illiterate though---if she's not faking it.

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James Wynn — 14 Nov 2011, 21:07 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

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Sand? What the...!!

Seriously, though, this is more like a kwansit hut built on sand. But many assertions that There's Nothing To See Here are also not founded in granite.

The question of whether Violet is a chem was worth knocking around for these reasons: Only Sand uses this supposed "term of endearment". He never employs it toward anyone but Violet; neither bio or chem. We'd be morons not to knock around the idea that she is a chem, just to dispense with it. I'm not inclined to believe that she is, but I \*do\* believe more is going on. I always have.

I want to distinguish things we definitely know and what is not confirmation of anything (I don't do this to \*prove\* that Violet is a chem):

Violet works at Orchids. Violet makes extra money as a spy. Hyacinth was a spy for the Trivigaunte and has also worked at Orchids. If Violet is a chem, the people she works for know it, but this is only necessarily true if she is a chem. Her claim not to be able to read undermines this suspicion, but she could be lying. A desire for money is not evidence that she is a chem. One of the black mechanics has altered his chem so that he works for no money. There is a chem, Sard, who runs a shop. Chems want things money can buy. Since they want replacement parts, their desire is possibly greater.

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Jordon Flato — 15 Nov 2011, 01:39 · in reply to James Wynn

Admittedly I haven't closely followed this thread, but it strikes me that a tough talking chem like sand would certainly say "hello, plutonium" when he saw a beautiful woman instead of "hello, hot stuff". Too simple?

On Nov 14, 2011 1:40 PM, "James Wynn" <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

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David Stockhoff — 15 Nov 2011, 02:18 · in reply to Jordon Flato

Possible. But (1) it's capitalized and (2) plutonium fluoride, the form it's usually stored in, is violet. So it's specific to Violet.

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And only Sand says it. And he literally *\*never\** calls Violet by her name, or anything else.