

Editor in China requesting help with translation

The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 17 Dec 2013

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6486>

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Lee — 17 Dec 2013, 15:25

I carried them to her, and she said my beard had shot up like them, and I should be bluer of cheek than the run of common men, and the next day begged my pardon for it, saying I was that already.

IIRC, the "she" is Thecla speaking to Severian while imprisoned. I can't see why she would beg for pardon for saying he wasn't yet pale enough.

Thecla struggled between dismissing Severian as a boy toy and truly caring about him. So I am with the majority in thinking the "blue" refers to beard shadow and this is an example in which she fears she had implied he was not yet a man and hopes to make up for it.

confirm the outcome of a love affair by putting the elector of one suit atop the patroness of another

My first thought on seeing the word "suit" in the context of a love affair is the idea of seeking a hand in marriage, as in "suitor".

Perhaps it is a bit of that, but I prefer the primary meaning as interpreted by Gwern as tarot card reading as it relates both to putting a suit upon a suit and confirming a love affair outcome through fortune telling.

Jerry Friedman — 18 Dec 2013, 16:16 · in reply to Lee

On Tuesday, December 17, 2013 10:25 AM, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:
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I agree completely. As a prisoner, she has nothing to think about all day but whether she has offended her boy lover, who she hopes will be helpful to her.

confirm the outcome of a love affair by putting the elector of one suit atop the patroness of another

My first thought on seeing the word "suit" in the context of a love affair is the idea of seeking a hand in marriage, as in "suitor".

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I agree again, except that the cards don't have to be Tarot cards. You can tell fortunes with regular cards, too, as Carmen does in the opera. So the suits are spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs, or swords, cups, coins, and wands, or whatever they are in the Commonwealth. (Is it strange that Wolfe doesn't make up suits for us--rockets and chips, for instance?)? Elector and patroness are two ranks. Does Severian know anything about kings and queens?

Jerry Friedman

Gwern Branwen — 18 Dec 2013, 16:20 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On Wed, Dec 18, 2013 at 11:16 AM, Jerry Friedman

<jerry_friedman at yahoo.com> wrote:

Does

Severian know anything about kings and queens?

Yes. Grepping my 5 ebooks of New Sun, there are the following hits:

There was a sudden intensity in his quavering voice. "Severian, the king was elected at the Marchfield.

Counts were appointed by the kings. That was what they called the dark ages. A baron was only a

approach of battles, earthquakes, and the murders of kings.

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cork became queen from ice to ice. Just

muttered, "Yes, it is a very old story, and the hero had told the

king, his father, that if he failed he would

a lovely woman named Early Summer. She was the queen of that

land, but her king was a strong, unforgiving man, and because she

plant entered her and she conceived. She told the king, however,

prophecies pleased the king much.

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the king's enemies were drilled until they seemed men of bronze

to Urth, and there he came to know of two brothers who were kings.

never breed sons who would claim their grandfather's kingdom,

their growth in her womb from the king, her uncle, they could not

forth the wolves and called them the people of his kingdom, and

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Barbatus added, "You've commanded armies, Severian. You're a king and a

the queen or guardian of your Urth, dismiss the thought. I am not. But yes,

"You think me a queen, or something of the sort. Will it amaze you

to discover

Great Erebus, who has established his kingdom there, will soon be driven

Abaia's, whose kingdom is in the warm waters. With others, less in might but

a thing more marvelous on Yesod. The young king, bright with such gold as is

gwern

<http://www.gwern.net>

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 18 Dec 2013, 17:00 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

Well, he knows the words, or seems to, though AFAICT none of these usages is Severian's, though ultimately all cases are the translator's usage. One is Jonas's.

But let's take them at face value. To Severian those words must be as archaic and obscure as,

say, "haruspex" is to us, or perhaps only "godking" or "imperator." There are no kings or queens in Urth and may have not been for chiliads, because of Typhon, the autarchy, and Erebus/Abaia/Ascia. I interpret their use to suggest political unreality (and in a sense generic neutrality, as opposed to, say, "Chairman") vs. political reality---same as in our fairy tales but more so. Similarly, "prince" is the son of a king, not the lord of an ancient principality. The upshot is that I don't expect the card above "patroness" to be "king." In the tarot, as Gwern points out, there are four face cards; in the regular deck only three. Either it is elector/patroness/autarch or it is something like [page?/uhlan?/patroness/elector](#). And given the Byzantine and Holy Roman touches, I'd go with the latter (Tarot).

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gwern

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"(Is it strange that Wolfe doesn't make up suits for us--rockets and chips, for instance?)? "

Great name for a starport eatery: Ships'n'Chips. Or would that be more like a Radio Shack?

On Wednesday, December 18, 2013 12:00 PM, DAVID STOCKHOFF <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

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