

The lady in pink\ VRT's mother

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 27 May 1998

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Tony Ellis — 27 May 1998, 13:50

Robert Borski wrote:

She lives in the same boarding house as Marsch/VRT and she is the woman identified as Celestine Etienne.

An intriguing idea. My biggest problem with it is that surely Mlle Etienne is too young to be David's mother. Marsch judges her to be 27 or 28; Gene he judged to be 18, and David is at least as old as his "brother". Mlle Etienne would have been about 10 when David was born!

On top of this, I don't feel that her lanky looks are the same thing as the elongated beauty of Maitre's prostitutes. She comes across more as a lonely, awkward spinster - especially given the candle reference.

I've always assumed that the lady in pink was Gene's surrogate mother.

Now have a crack at my theory, Robert. I say that we meet - well, almost meet - VRT's mother. She's the prisoner in the next cell.

For one thing, the female prisoner is described as "illiterate... and a habitual petty thief", which is what we would expect of an Annese woman. For another, we have VRT's conviction that his mother is alive and would come back to town for the winters. He also says of her that "there seemed to be some reason to think, at Roncevaux, that she had come here".

Finally, I just plain love the irony of VRT being next door to his mother in jail without realizing it, and I suspect G.W. would too. And why else give VRT a mysterious neighbour, and reveal telling details about her in the last moments of the story?