

Dial A Throne

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Jul 1998

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Robert Borski — 06 Jul 1998, 21:35

William Ansley, with NaCl on his tongue, has recently written:

"(By the way, could you please favor us with all the dirt on how you "almost certainly" work out that "the name of 'not-so-young man' in the 'bathroom' [is] 'John Clute.'") But if that's the case, then why is the bowling ball described as being on the throne. (If a chair of massy gold isn't a throne, I'd like to know what is!)"

The *bowl*ing ball is a misapprehended toilet *bowl*--note, each also has the requisite three holes.

The "arms of the chair" slapped by the "bowling ball" is the toilet seat rim (usually horseshoe shaped) being dropped. And of course the throne is a "throne"--a very common euphemism for toilet here in the US (although usually it's referred to as a porcelain throne).

"John" also means "bathroom" as in "I have to go to the john." Clute follows the same linguistic morphing patterns as clue-cue-coot-cutie-cootie et al. Hence "John" "Clute."

Just as a curious sidenote, it was in the writings of John Clute that I first discovered Number Five's name could be worked out to be Gene Wolfe. Perhaps having been queried about this by John (all entirely speculative, I grant you), Gene Wolfe decided to show him how "easily" it could be done with JC's name. Dunno.

As for what "dialing" is or isn't, you're free to accept whatever. But the simple truth of the matter is that this IS what tuning in a TV channel was called during the heyday of my childhood, 50 years ago. We also may not have had Channels above 11 in the beginning; hence the reference to no TV/maze at 12; but I'm not absolutely sure. (There were no telecasts that ran beyond midnight at any rate.) One of my contemporaries found an old black-and-white tv in his basement that was purchased in 1964 and it only went to 13. Earlier versions--circa 1950--may have only gone to 10 or 11. I have no immediate sources to check, but if I find out anything (I used to know a physics professor who collected antique tvs, but he died several years ago), I'll be happy to share. Maybe someone else could help?

So now too St. Paul is the patron saint of salt, William?

Robert Borski