

razors here 'n' there

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 28 Oct 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/557>

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m.driussi — 28 Oct 1998, 17:39

Odd detail re: the razor of Silk's father, potent and mysterious artifact. It reminds me of a detail from the Jonas/Miles engima in TBOTNS, when Severian asks the reanimated soldier if he carries a razor.

"I mention this trifling incident because it was the first thing I said to him that he seemed to comprehend. He nodded, then reaching under his hauberk produced one of those little blades that country people use, razors their smiths grind from the halves of worn oxshoes. I ... asked if he had soap. If he did, he failed to understand me, and after a moment he seated himself on a rock from which he could stare into the water" (IV, ch. 3).

This scene contains much. That the soldier stares into the water like Narcissus is one thing, but that it later turns out he somehow looks like a male form of Jolenta (Severian shows him his face in a mirror and asks him if it is like the one of the most beautiful woman in the world; "Miles" says yes; then Severian tells him Jolenta is dead [ch. 6]) is an additional puzzle piece which I don't think has ever been addressed. (Is the body "Miles" therefore literally the brother of Jolenta? Or is this another case of mirror magic transformation--that the Briatic creature who steps into the mirrors returns looking something more like the beloved: so that the cat of "The Cat" goes in like a cat but comes out like a miniature Sancha?)

Be that as it may, the point of this post is the apparently heavy weight carried by "razor" but not "soap" in the mind of the risen soldier. This sure seems to be significant, and it even seems familiar--but of what? Something in Tarzan? Certainly there was a scene in "Greystoke: the Legend of Tarzan" (if I got the title right and the scene right) involving the naming of razor, but nothing like that in the book Tarzan.

Is it something slight and oblique, like "razors are made of the metal iron; androids are made of metal and named after iron; therefore the Jonas in Miles remembers razor (which might presuppose that Jonas was riding in Miles before the death by fever, instead of strictly after the death by fever)"?

Hard to say. This razor connection isn't nearly as strong as the "scarf of entrapment" which appears directly in both TBOTNS and TBOTLS.

=mantis=

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.