

PEACE: Doris dons a second veil, vanishes completely!

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 01 Nov 2000

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 01 Nov 2000, 17:03

Back to Doris, the Cinderella electric.

One of the few clues I thought we had about Doris related to the sepia

tinted photograph, so I wrote:

Who is the woman in Den's life who looks like Carole Lombard?

And Roy pointed out the timeframe, which, together with his EZ Timeline, eliminates the main candidates for Doris's secret identity:

Ah, a coup! Teenage Doris is neither Sherry (who would be 20-25 in 1963), nor Sherry's hypothetical daughter (she would be too young; 3-8?); the Doris mystery deepens!

But further private counseling with Roy points up my mistake about the photos: I thought that one had a trio (Doris, the giant, and a second man [who is not Charlie Turner]), and the other was a risque photo of Candy. But no: the photo with the giant has only the giant and the second man; there is no photo of Doris; the photo of Candy is the one that looks like Carole Lombard (and since Candy is Doris's half-sister, then it becomes dicey trying to factor a family resemblance).

We have no idea what Doris looks like.

I had also somehow thought that Den had seen a photo of Doris at dinner, but no, that doesn't seem to be the case. Since Den has not seen her, then her age and her circumstance (sudden orphan; her mother had died long before; her father just died), possibly the town she joined the carnival (Hattiesburg), these are the points that get Den interested.

The sepia of the photos causes all sorts of trouble. I assumed it to be real, meaning that the photos are several decades old; but Dan'l pointed out to me some time ago that "old-fashioned" photos have long been a staple of carnies (a "forgery" that puts doubt into the real-time placement of such artifacts).

(BTW I love that table, Dan'l: yay, Gilbert! Maybe we should make one for stories and morals?)

The trail is so cold. The Doris thing could be a complete red herring. OTOH, Roy and I agree that the mysterious second man in the photo with the giant is probably Julius Smart (or maybe Mr. Tilly): if this is the case, then the timeframe 1963 is wildly at variance with the people (circa 1923?).

We may have another case of a cross-time haunting: similar to Aunt Bella's "Ghost Chaser" article, and similar to how ghost-of-the-future Den is haunting us as we read the book. (The "lesson for Den" moral of the Ghost Chaser story seems to be "time is fluid for hauntings"; this is what I mean about the idea for a table for stories and morals.)

Because the thing of it is this: Den is writing. Part of the moral of the Lou Gold episode seems to be "a writer is by nature a forger." Which shows up in the way that Den forges Lang and ARABIAN NIGHTS tales in order to tell things that he cannot otherwise write down, and even then he veers off when things get too painful.

On the one hand, Den's forgeries amount to attempts to influence his younger self, either literally (through time travel) or the inner child still carried within. OTOH, they are abortive genre switches, such as Adam has shown are carried out to completion in each of the five sections: the writer Den is struggling to find his way through the maze.

Den is writing, and by this he seems to enter fugue-states where he continues writing what is going on (like those Lovecraft stories where the victim gets to write his own scream at the end "Aaiaieieie . . ." <g> Hey, notice that Lovecraft reference early on? In first talking about the new races in section one, Den mentions "the blind idiot god" in a line that reminds me of Lovecraft; long before Gold's lecture on Lovecraft in section four). One of the things I love about PEACE is the way that certain things are crossed, blended, confused: for example, "writing" as Den is practicing it, is also a lot like reading.

This confusion is best illustrated by Olivia's last line, a line that should come when he is =reading=, not when he is writing. But for Den, the two are not dissimilar: he is reading his own book as he is writing it.

So what is it about Doris? What happened back in the '20s?

Well, for that matter: how did it come about that the daughters of Mr. Eliot (are they twins? They're names seem like it.) =both= came to Cassionsville (from the South)? <g> That is, Den's mom and her sister.

=mantis=