

PEACE: In the office?

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 03 Nov 2000

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Roy C. Lackey — 03 Nov 2000, 13:48

Dan'I wrote:

<<But... Perhaps his life is "Kansas" and his LAD "Oz?" Idunno. That doesn't seem to work too well. I sort of want to see Part 5, which takes place more in the LAD office and less in his memory/world as "Ozzish" and the sepia photo as a reminder (souvenir?!?) of the "Kansasish" memory/world. But is it workable? And if it is, is it workable only by forcefitting?>>

Actually, I'm not sure that any of Part 5 takes place in the LAD office. In the frametale he left the LAD office and went to Mab Crawford's kitchen (186-187). He was trying to find his way back to the glassed-in porch with the fireplace (162, 201), but didn't. Instead: "But I carry my notebook and pen with me, and write, sometimes, in the corridors, and sometimes in strange rooms." (201) (BTW, the pen had been a pencil before, page 187.) Then he finds his old apartment in the Commons (201), the last place he specifically mentions being in the frametale. The conclusion of Part 4 and the beginning of Part 5 are told in a straightforward manner (except for his comment to Sherry about having had a stroke). Once Miss Hadow leaves his office and he closes the curtains, he thinks that the plant is an illusion, but when he leaves the office she is still at Birkhead's desk (227). Dan French is there with the reporter, they tour the plant, Den and Dan go back to the office, Dan tells the Sidhe story, Den wakes up dead, Dan is gone, Aunt Vi's voice is on the intercom, end of book. He never got back to the frametale office, or any other museum room he had already been in, for that matter.

Part 5 seems to me the most realistic section of the book. There are only two places where anything odd occurs (relatively speaking <g>), the second of which is the last paragraph. The other oddity is that Birkhead was there before he read Charlie's letter, but was gone when he finished it. It wouldn't have happened that way in real life. There is a 10 to 12 year gap there. If the letter ever existed, and was addressed to Weer and otherwise authentic, he would have been reading it circa 1963-64. When Miss Hadow answered his summons it would have been 1974-75, when both Birkhead and Weer died. That the next letter in the pile was nailed down and was addressed to Smart (from Peacock, who had been dead since the 1930s), indicates something odd is going on, but it didn't take place in either his real office or the duplicate one. Weer got rid of Smart's desk when he became president, and if he ever had a duplicate office created at home, Smart's mail wouldn't very likely be on it.

If Birkhead was at her desk when he returned from his visit to Van Ness, then the reminder note on his desk in the last paragraph and the doctor visit for that afternoon that he mentioned to French, could not be referring to the follow-up visit requested by Van Ness for later in the day after his last patient, at least a decade earlier. If, in real life, Weer ever had occasion to undergo psychological testing by Van Ness (how many MDs have such props to hand?)--then when, why? If he never took such tests, whence his familiarity with them, and why did he mention them in his account, especially as they seem to have been administered in consequence of an imaginary visit to a dead doctor for a stroke he hadn't had yet? Are imaginary people always so judgemental?

Roy