

Copperheaded Lilith; timetable

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 19 May 2001

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Adam Stephanides — 19 May 2001, 17:35

on 5/9/01 3:20 AM, Roy C. Lackey at rlackey@stic.net wrote:
Here is my spin on "Copperhead".

Very insightful post; just a couple of quibbles.

As

both Endymion and Paul Duggan have noted before me, the difficult phrase "Vhas a grouse.", I translate as "[He] Was a grouse." In American slang, a grouse is a person who habitually complains. She was referring to Adam, and she is, as mantis intimated, Lilith.

I'm not happy with this translation, though it's better than any of the alternatives I've seen (and I can't think of anything else myself). For one thing, it seems unlikely that she'd be using uncommon American slang. For another, it's phonetically inconsistent with the rest of her dialect. Elsewhere she says "how" as "'ow," and "about" as "ahbawt"; and there are no other transformations of "ow" into "oo."

But if she is saying "was a grouse," with the meaning Roy gives, she is surely talking about herself, not Adam or Boone. After all, she immediately goes on to describe how she "groused," and Lilith's grouching is one of the things she is most known for (it's also what has made her a modern-day feminist heroine, something Wolfe would no doubt be sensitive to). Besides, when Lilith was with Adam, they were still in Eden; what would he have to "grouse" about?

When the NP, in his new-found Pride at the Power of his position, inadvertently pressed a button on the Changer and exchanged the copperhead snake in the leaves for its cognate in The Garden, he got Lilith, Adam's first wife, who represents Sin, in general, and Lust, specifically.

And mantis wrote:

She acts like a sex kitten with a destructive agenda, which would be "early Lilith" I guess (as opposed to "Lilith, =mother= of monsters").

Lilith has changed over time, but as far as I can tell she never behaved very much like Jane Doe. According to my skimpy research (in several reference books, but primarily the Encyclopedia Judaica), she derived from Babylonian demons called lilitu. These were of two types: one endangered women in childbirth and strangled their babies, and the other were succubi. Later, in midrashic literature (Jewish commentaries upon the Torah), it was said that she had slept with Adam and given birth to male and female demons. A later midrash had Lilith as Adam's first wife, who left him and became a killer of newborn children. The final picture of Lilith synthesized all these threads: she was both a killer of newborn children and a succubus who spawned demons from the seed she collected.

So while Lilith is a seducer of men, she does so in order to engender demons, which Jane Doe has no interest in; conversely, we apparently never see Lilith using her sexuality to stir up discord. Nor can one really say that Lilith represents Lust. So we might see Jane Doe as a conflation of Lilith, the Serpent, and Eve (who is the real sexual temptress of the Genesis story).

Incidentally, Lilith left Adam not because she wouldn't have sex with him, but because she wouldn't have sex with him on top: "You will not never grunt over me" indeed! Perhaps the assertion that he was "Not like you" refers to Clinton's "feminism" (or Hilary's supposed domination of him). <g>

Blattid wrote:

This is all workable, as follows. I'm going to use the 2008 election to avoid implicating any specific living persons:

Winter 2007/8: The Old President dies/resigns/whatever, the NP succeeds to office (with minimalist inauguration)

Spring 2008: The trouble in Spokane

Summer 2008: The crash

Late Summer/Early Fall 2008: Lilith appears

November 2008: The NP is elected for the first time

January 2009: The NP is inaugurated. He is now in a meaningful sense a New President -- he will have the "honeymoon" period with press & Congress that any new administration gets.

February-March 2009: The murder

March-April 2009: "Copperhead." (It is Spring, and about three years before the beginning of the 2012 campaign season.)

I don't believe that if NP had been in office over a year, he would still be referred to as a "new President," even if he had been elected for the first time four months ago. (The last time this situation occurred was with LBJ (Ford wasn't reelected); anybody care to look through old newspapers on microfilm and confirm or disconfirm my belief?)

--Adam