

Slippery Gene

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 05 May 2002

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Nigel Price — 05 May 2002, 16:47

Taking a brief and guilty break from the world of literary SF, I'm currently zipping my way through a cheerfully trashy volume misleadingly entitled "Roger Zelazny's Alien Speedway Book 1", which is in fact written by someone called Jeffrey A. Carver. As a devoted reader and hoarder of the works of the late Mr Z., I picked up the paperback in question in order to fill in one of the few remaining gaps in my collection. I have had books 2 and 3 in this series for years, but had never been able to track down the missing volume 1. The only bits by Zelazny in each book are the introductions, which are fun. The stories themselves are hack work by various young hopefuls set in a world apparently devised by the aforementioned author. So, ones to file under Minor Works, Apocryphal Writings and Pseudoepigraphia, but moderately interesting for obsessive completists like myself.

I mention all this because early in Book 1, which is entitled "Clypsis", the teenage runaway hero encounters a stout and mysterious stranger while vainly seeking for work on some grimy spacedocks. Here is the unflattering description of this stranger:

"Facing him was a stocky man - no, pudgy he decided instantly and uncharitably - dressed in faded blue spacer clothes. The man had dark eyebrows and thinning black hair, and he wore smoked glasses. As he shifted his weight to gaze at Mike face to face, it was obvious that he moved with a limp."

Interestingly, the man gives his name as "Slippery Gene".

("Don't worry about it, kid. It's just a nickname.")

Good grief - could it be? Surely not? It can't be!

Is Our Favourite Author really making an unwitting cameo appearance as a minor character in a decidedly minor work? I wouldn't have taken the idea seriously but for that limp - it's mentioned several times. I've no idea whether GW limps, but so many of his characters do.

Nigel (who is now even beginning to wonder whether the Monkees were making sly lupine digs in that song of theirs...)