

More Musings on Peace - Timeline

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 21 Aug 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3417>

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StoneOx17 — 21 Aug 2002, 03:32

Hello,

This is an elaboration on my previous post, where I speculated about the meaning of the banshee story. I have some new thoughts about this story, which I'll give in a later post, and also a proposed revision of the timeline that mantis proposed, which is the focus of this message.

In a message dated 8/19/2002, mantis writes (constructing a time table).:

1934 (Weer at 20) Weer buys car as college junior

1935 (Weer at 21) Weer graduates from college; picnic with Margaret ("age of the bicycle") => engagement with qualifications (we've discussed this angle before, iirc)

1938 (Weer at 24) Coldhouse prank.

1939 (Weer at 25) the Chinese Garden dream.

Okay, the only problems are "age of the bicycle," which could be fixed by moving the picnic two years back to 1933; and the date of Olivia's death, which I haven't placed here (because you did not mention where it goes), since it complicates matters between Smart and Weer, including Weer's employment.

As Roy remarks, the picnic occurred when Weer was in high school. Weer's senior year would have been 1931, after the stock market crash. But I think there are good reasons to believe that the Weer fortune hadn't been lost yet, as I'll explain later, so I'm putting the picnic in spring of 1931, when Weer was a senior.

When I wrote the earlier post, I wasn't sure where Olivia's death went. Now I want to put it in 1929. Where did Julius get the money to build the factory? My gut feeling is that neither the carny business nor Bledsoe's drugstore would be sufficient (even factoring in bank loans). If Julius sells the farms he inherited from Olivia, and uses the proceeds to build the factory, he can make a lot more money if he sells them before the stock market crashes, and this makes for a much neater story. However, he probably wouldn't be able to sell the farms before Olivia's death, as the Weers would feel obligations to their tenant farmers; the breaking of these obligations may be one of the reasons Julius stops speaking to Den (and his parents) after Olivia's death. Putting Olivia's death in the spring of 1929 might leave just enough time for the farms in her estate to clear probate and be sold before the crash. Further, this timing fits well with the statements that Sally's meeting of Lou Gold (shortly after he emigrates to England in 1928) and Olivia's death are both 25 years before the Gold Hunt. (Although 1928 fits nearly as well, and allows more than enough time for the probate and farm sale.)

Another item to put on the time line is when the Weers lost their fortune. The stock market

crashed in 1929, but I suspect that didn't affect farming immediately ... I would assume that farmers didn't start losing their farms until the 1930 harvest failed to raise enough cash to pay bank loans. And after looking on the web, it seems that banks were still foreclosing on farms in June 1934, when Congress passed the Frazier-Lemke act, which was intended to keep farmers from losing their farms. So the Weer fortune could have been lost anywhere between late 1930 and mid-1934 (maybe even later). I'm putting it in 1934, letting Den buy his car and pay most of his college tuition before his family loses their money.

Why did the Weers lose their fortune? I have a story which makes sense to me, but really isn't either supported or contradicted by the text. John Weer had major expenses in 1923 through 1927, with the extended tour of Europe and with Olivia's wedding. It would make sense to take out a bank loan, using his farms as collateral, in order to pay for it. Before 1929, the income from the farms was easily enough to pay it off, but farm income dropped precipitously in the Great Depression. The Weers were able to scrape by for a few years by using their other resources, while always expecting that the economic downturn would end. Eventually, however, they were unable to meet the loan payments and the bank foreclosed on their farms. Note that these farms are very likely some of the ones that Stewart Blaine "picked up for a song" during the Great Depression.

So here's my revision of mantis' time line:

1925 (Weer at 11) Olivia marries J. Smart, who moves into her house. Den is still living there since his parents are still overseas. Bank loans for Den's father.

1927 (Weer at 13) Den's parents return from Europe; Den moves back into the old house with them, after a separation of four years. More bank loans (expenses from the Europe trip) for Den's father.

1929 (Weer at 15) Spring: aunt Olivia dies. October: stock market crashes. Julius starts building factory.

1931 (Weer at 17) Weer senior in high school; picnic with Margaret ("age of the bicycle") => engagement with qualifications (we've discussed this angle before, iirc)

1934 (Weer at 20) Weer buys car as college junior. Bank forecloses on John Weer's farms.

1935 (Weer at 21) Weer graduates from college; jobs are scarce, but he finds one as engineer at Julius' factory.

1938 (Weer at 24) Coldhouse prank.

1939 (Weer at 25) the Chinese Garden dream.

Even if you don't accept my arguments that Julius conspired to kill Aunt Olivia, Den is treated very shabbily by three of his aunt's suitors. Professor Peacock kills his aunt. Stewart Blaine forecloses on his father's farms. And Julius Smart blackmails him with the coldhouse prank to make him work for peanuts. This reminds me somehow of the first part of The Count of Monte Cristo, where three of his 'friends' conspire to have Edmond Dantes arrested and imprisoned for life. Like Dantes, Weer ends up fabulously rich, but in Weer's case it does not make him happy, and there is no revenge for him.

Next post: the natural history of banshees.

- Stone Ox

Roy C. Lackey — 21 Aug 2002, 15:30 · follows StoneOx17

Stone Ox wrote:

When I wrote the earlier post, I wasn't sure where Olivia's death went.

Now

I want to put it in 1929. Where did Julius get the money to build the factory? My gut feeling is that neither the carny business nor Bledsoe's drugstore would be sufficient (even factoring in bank loans). If Julius sells the farms he inherited from Olivia, and uses the proceeds to build the factory, he can make a lot more money if he sells them before the stock market crashes, and this makes for a much neater story

[snip]

The main problem with this is that Olivia didn't have any farms for Smart to inherit. John Weer controlled the Weer estate; he and his wife were still alive and Olivia had been dependent on John for most of her income before her marriage. Julius did, however, inherit Olivia's house, which he sold to the city at some point, to become the public library.

[snip]

Another item to put on the time line is when the Weers lost their fortune. The stock market crashed in 1929, but I suspect that didn't affect farming immediately ... I would assume that farmers didn't start losing their farms until the 1930 harvest failed to raise enough cash to pay bank loans.

[snip]

Right, about the 1930 harvest being the beginning of the end for the Weer wealth. I have touched on this before; see:

<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0030/0104.shtml>

-Roy