

PEACE: Smart

The Urth list — 13 messages, 7 voices, 14 Oct 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3484>

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Roy C. Lackey — 14 Oct 2002, 04:37

We know even less about Julius Smart than we know about Weer, for all his being a "symbolic" figure and "the central character of this book". I want to address two facts related to him that seem to be antithetical.

We are told that for 25 years, since the death of Olivia, that Smart did not speak to his nephew, Weer. We are not told why. Despite this estrangement, when Julius died, Weer inherited the company. Again, why? It would seem that the fact of, or circumstances surrounding, Olivia's death triggered the alienation. If the former, it raises (A) questions about their relationship while she was alive; if the latter, what were (B) those circumstances regarding her death that would cause Julius to want to have no more to do with him?

(A) Weer lived with his aunt and Julius for two years after their marriage, in his aunt's house, and was living there for almost an equal length of time before the marriage, the entire time they were courting. Smart was, de facto, a father surrogate for Weer, from the age of ten or eleven to thirteen. He was about fifteen years older than his nephew. Weer returned to his parent's house, just down the alley from his aunt's house, when they came back from Europe. Weer was either in high school or college when his aunt died, which is cause for a digression.

It is usually assumed that the choice not to speak was Smart's. The dates of Olivia's death and when the juice plant was built may be relevant. Weer states that Smart was already making money while Olivia was still alive and he was still living with them, but the source of the income isn't given. It almost has to be from the drugstore, because Blaine's account of his own and his bank's fortunes implies that it wasn't until a few years after the start of the Depression that a local market for potatoes was created by the plant's operations. The plant had to have existed by 1935, because Weer accepted a job there while he was still in college. The fact that Olivia named the juice product implies that it had been invented, certainly, and possibly that it was in production before her death. In any event, this would seem to place both her death and the plant's founding sometime in the early Thirties.

That Weer continued to live with his aunt for two years after her marriage means that he was about eleven when they married, which places the year as 1925. If the assumptions in the preceding paragraph are correct, then Olivia lived for 6-8 years after marriage. Whatever strain, if any, that Weer's presence for the first two years put on the marriage should have ended when he went back to his parents. Did it? He states that his parents remained forever strangers to him after abandoning him for several years. Did he cling to the stability that had been afforded to him by his aunt, whether or not Julius was amenable, and despite the fact that he resented the changes that Julius brought to his life? Did Julius resent the boy, only tolerating him for his wife's sake?

(B) And then there's the question of Olivia's infidelities. How could Weer, a boy, be aware that she was having sex with both Peacock and Macafee, and Julius not be? When Weer wrote that "--when she was Mrs. Smart--repent three or four times a year of her casual connection with

Professor Peacock and her occasional nights with Mr. Macafee", did he mean that he was present when she confessed to Julius? (And where was young Den those nights?) To whom else would such an even token confession be meaningful? Which brings me back to the circumstances of her death. Was it an accident? Not likely. We know only from Wolfe's say so that Peacock was the culprit; the text gives no hint. Why did he do it? Jealousy? Of Macafee? I don't see the relevance; she was married anyway. Or was that the reason, that Julius was jealous, and Peacock was his friend, who would kill for him? Or was jealousy the pretext and the real reason money? Would Olivia's death bring Smart some money (he sold her house to the city), money he needed to start up the plant? Was that nailed-down letter from Peacock to Smart (which would/should not have been on either Weer's real or replica desk) relevant?

What if that letter, which Weer obviously has knowledge of, implicated Smart in Olivia's death, whether before or after the fact? (Perhaps Peacock was blackmailing Smart, or threatened to, or Smart feared he would. Perhaps, also, Smart's pharmaceutical skills were used to silence Peacock, who "died only a few years afterward of a complicated series of disorders said to have been aggravated by hypertension". Shades of the Tilly tale.) What if Weer had read that letter? What if the choice not to speak to one another after the funeral was Weer's? That he despised Julius, but with his father's wealth being sapped by the Depression, he took advantage of the situation to make Julius an offer he couldn't refuse? In a Faustian twist, Weer agreed to a fixed term of silent service--say twenty-five years--at the end of which Julius would hand over the company to him and fade away--maybe to join the circus or live on the beach in Florida. Smart would have accumulated a handsome personal fortune by then, enough to live out his days in comfort. Smart would have only been in his early sixties when Weer took over his company. People just assume that Smart had to die in order for Weer to gain control of the company, and that he did die. But the text doesn't ever say that Smart died, or even hint at it. And during those twenty-five years Weer would be guaranteed a living wage.

This scenario might also explain the "what went wrong" angle. Weer wouldn't inherit his father's estate "between the ages of twenty and thirty" as he, and perhaps Margaret, had rather optimistically and unrealistically planned. But he would inherit his uncle's wealth between the ages of forty and fifty. Either he felt he was unable to tell Margaret of his scheme, because she might rat on him, or he did tell her and she was unable or unwilling to wait that long.

-Roy

Bratt Ian — 14 Oct 2002, 05:05 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Sun, 13 Oct 2002, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

We are told that for 25 years, since the death of Olivia, that Smart did not speak to his nephew, Weer. We are not told why. Despite this estrangement, when Julius died, Weer inherited the company. Again, why?

I had always thought that Weer gaining control of the company was completely independent of his connection to Smart. When Smart died (or retired) Weer had been at the company the longest and was the best man for the job. Is there any evidence that disproves this? It has been a while since I read PEACE.

-ian

Roy C. Lackey — 14 Oct 2002, 05:31 · follows Bratt Ian

Ian quoted and wrote:

We are told that for 25 years, since the death of Olivia, that Smart did not speak to his nephew, Weer. We are not told why. Despite this

estrangement,
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The plant existed before Weer went to work there, so whether or not he was the longest-tenured employee, after Smart, I couldn't say. But in any event, succession to ownership of a business by seniority of employment is unheard of, at least by me. And Weer was hardly the best qualified employee; by his own account he was "an unimportant employee of the corporation he [Smart] had founded". (148)

-Roy

Michael Andre-Driussi — 14 Oct 2002, 23:26 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey's post on Smart. Again, that delightful feeling of seeing someone else write what I was on the verge of writing a week ago!

So good, we are thinking along the same lines!

However, I argued with myself before so now I'll give you the same.

First I would like to express my sense of the "EZ reading," which Roy first brought to my attention (though I was the one who named it). I was building a timeline on the assumption that 1) Weer had been the responsible prankster in the coldhouse prank, and 2) Weer was lying about the date when it happened to obscure his role. I had arrived at this position from talking (perhaps too much) with others about PEACE -- it was not an individualistic reading, and the new trick was to try and build a timeline around it.

Roy's attitude at the time seemed to be this: First, trust the text.

Well anyway, enough of that for now.

I, too, wondered at the possibility of a murder for hire at the bottom of the "nailed letter." And I went through the same permutations that Roy went through (some or maybe most I've seen other people try in informal settings such as this). There is a potential there, but I begin to disbelieve it myself.

As for Smart's behavior towards Weer. In order for a "sundering" at the funeral, there would have to be a "togetherness" beforehand, and while the two fellows were living under the same roof, even though they have a quasi-father/son relationship (or maybe make that "especially because they have a quasi-father/son relationship"), they might not be such pals at all. In contrast to the chummy antics of the other suitors, iirc we have no indication of the same with Smart and Weer. So, even if there were no other weirdness, the woman Olivia is the lynchpin that holds them in proximity: once she is gone, they might well drift apart. They don't go fishing together; they do not talk about books together; etc.

Ah, but there is other weirdness! Weer sees Olivia in the bathtub; Weer knows about Olivia's confessions of adultery (I imagine that she told Weer in some offhand manner ala Auntie Mame); Weer himself is a manslaughtering little weirdo who becomes a quasi-stepson during his

teenage years (challenging period). Smart suffers having this spy in his life, this kid who knows all the dirty laundry since he functions as his wife's confessor, and after the tragedy of losing his wife, Smart throws himself into his work, where he was always most comfortable anyway.

So the simplest solution would appear to be that Smart and Weer had nothing to say to each other, and that Weer inherited because Smart had no other family and Weer is related by the marriage to Olivia. (Or as Wolfe said to Damien Broderick, something like: Weer inherited from grumpy old Smart.)

(Nevermind how the coldhouse prank may have had an effect on anything.)

The letter from Peacock might be a confession that Peacock ran down Olivia (if we assume that it was a hit and run and nobody was ever charged).

The other thing about Smart that I've been mulling over again is how he equates to Napoleon, and what this means to the larger text. There is the biography that they all read; there is the statue Olivia buys for Smart; Smart's child-like size points to Napoleon's small stature; even Smart's possible earlier marriage (to "Mrs. Tilly") might point to Napoleon's marital scenario (Josephine and then Marie Louise) . . . and thus the strange anecdote about Napoleon's hand, which Weer alludes to, a tidbit which our dedicated fellow readers have =not= been able to find in the biography itself, may relate directly to Smart himself rather than Napoleon.

I really should read PEACE again, soon.

=mantis=

Roy C. Lackey — 15 Oct 2002, 05:57 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

mantis writes:

Roy C. Lackey's post on Smart. Again, that delightful feeling of seeing someone else write what I was on the verge of writing a week ago!

That sort of thing has happened to me far too often on this list; someone beating me to the punch, but "delightful" is not the word I would choose to describe my reaction. <g> I still can't believe that, back during the LITTLE, BIG discussion, you used that Jefferson Airplane line from "White Rabbit" to deflect some question to alga. I was gonna use that!

In contrast to the chummy antics of the other suitors, iirc we have no indication of the same with Smart and Weer. So, even if there were no other weirdness, the woman Olivia is the lynchpin that holds them in proximity: once she is gone, they might well drift apart. They don't go fishing together; they do not talk about books together; etc.

We agree, I think, that Weer and Smart were never pals, even when Olivia was alive. But to literally not speak to one another after her death betokens hard feelings on behalf of at least one party. Living in the same block as they did, in a small town, such an abrupt rift would call attention to itself, as it almost surely did. Whether intentional or not, such a rift would have to have extended to the entire Weer family; though unstated in the text, I doubt that Smart was on speaking terms with any of the Weers.

So the simplest solution would appear to be that Smart and Weer had nothing to say to each other, and that Weer inherited because Smart had no other family and Weer is related by the marriage to Olivia. (Or as Wolfe said to Damien Broderick, something like: Weer inherited from grumpy old Smart.)

But Smart did have other family, some of them blood kin. All those "relations" he had helping him look for a job after college; his "various aunts, you know, and cousins and in-laws" (115-16)

They can't _all_ be dead. And Wolfe's comment doesn't address _why_ Weer inherited.

The other thing about Smart that I've been mulling over again is how he equates to Napoleon, and what this means to the larger text. There is the biography that they all read; there is the statue Olivia buys for Smart; Smart's child-like size points to Napoleon's small stature; even Smart's possible earlier marriage (to "Mrs. Tilly") might point to Napoleon's marital scenario (Josephine and then Marie Louise) . . . and thus the strange anecdote about Napoleon's hand, which Weer alludes to, a tidbit which our dedicated fellow readers have =not= been able to find in the biography itself, may relate directly to Smart himself rather than Napoleon.

You meant, it was Smart who bought the Dresden figure for Olivia. I didn't know that no one had found the hand reference in Ludwig's bio. Strange. Maybe it has something to do with one of Smart's shoulders being "noticeably larger than the other". In depictions of Napoleon, is the shoulder corresponding to the hand in his waistcoat elevated higher than the other, making it look bigger? Anyone know?

-Roy

Mark Millman — 15 Oct 2002, 08:39 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Tue, 15 Oct 2002, Roy C. Lackey wrote:
You meant, it was Smart who bought the Dresden figure for Olivia. I didn't know that no one had found the hand reference in Ludwig's bio. Strange. Maybe it has something to do with one of Smart's shoulders being "noticeably larger than the other". In depictions of Napoleon, is the shoulder corresponding to the hand in his waistcoat elevated higher than the other, making it look bigger? Anyone know?

-Roy

Regrettably, I don't know about the size of Napoleon's shoulders; I certainly don't recall anything unusual from the pictures I've seen, but that doesn't mean much.

What struck me when you mentioned this is the fact that contemporary descriptions of Richard III describe him as having one shoulder that was higher than the other (the source for Shakespeare's propagandistically exaggerated "Crookback Dick"), and his portraits confirm this. I don't recall whether he was of unusually short stature, but he certainly stood in the shadow of his elder brother, Edward IV, during Edward's lifetime.

Mark Millman

StoneOx17 — 15 Oct 2002, 13:41 · follows Mark Millman

In a very interesting post, Roy C. Lackey writes:

We are told that for 25 years, since the death of Olivia, that Smart did not speak to his nephew, Weer. We are not told why. Despite this estrangement, when Julius died, Weer inherited the company. Again, why?

Good questions. I note that Weer's comment about not speaking to Julius for 25 years was not addressed to the reader, but to Aaron Gold, which, at least by my rules for interpretation, means he might be lying (possibly to avoid mentioning the coldhouse prank). Weer and Julius certainly weren't buddies, though -- Weer does tell us directly that the only occasions from which he remembers Julius well after the funeral were laboratory inspections.

Which brings me back to the circumstances of [Olivia's] death. Was it an accident? Not likely.

We

know only from Wolfe's say so that Peacock was the culprit; the text gives no hint.

There are a few things I think are hints. It's revealed that Peacock owned a car. He doesn't show up at the funeral, and Weer assumes that he isn't grieving (thus revealing that Weer, at least, suspected that it was murder). Finally, in the Chinese garden dream, the earthenware troll under the bridge possibly resembles Aunt Olivia's ceramic garden gnomes. And in the princess fairy tale, the suitor representing Peacock is the youngest son of the king of the gnomes. However, if Wolfe hadn't confirmed it, I suspect I wouldn't be convinced.

Was that nailed-down letter from Peacock to Smart (which would/should not have been on either Weer's real or replica desk) relevant?

What if that letter, which Weer obviously has knowledge of, implicated Smart in Olivia's death, whether before or after the fact? (Perhaps Peacock was blackmailing Smart, or threatened to, or Smart feared he would.

It was on the President's desk, so I presumed that Weer saw it when he went through Julius's files after he inherited the company, and that Julius received it when he was President, thus probably after Olivia's death. This means Weer couldn't have seen it before Aunt Olivia's funeral (and how would he have gotten his hands on Julius's private mail anyway?), so I don't see that it could be Weer's grounds for suspicion at the funeral.

Perhaps, also, Smart's pharmaceutical skills were used to silence Peacock, who "died only a few years afterward of a complicated series of disorders said to have been aggravated by hypertension".

Alternatively, he could have died from medical disorders brought on by guilt.

What if the choice not to speak to one another after the funeral was Weer's? That he despised Julius, but with his father's wealth being sapped by the Depression, he took advantage of the situation to make Julius an offer he couldn't refuse? In a Faustian twist, Weer agreed to a fixed term of silent service--say twenty-five years--at the end of which Julius would hand over the company to him and fade away--maybe to join the circus or live on the beach in Florida. Smart would have accumulated a handsome personal fortune by then, enough to live out his days in comfort. Smart would have only been in his early sixties when Weer took over his company.

People just assume that Smart had to die in order for Weer to gain control of the company, and that he did die. But the text doesn't ever say

that Smart died, or even hint at it. And during those twenty-five years Weer would be guaranteed a living wage.

I like the idea that Weer doesn't speak to Julius because he suspects complicity in Aunt Olivia's death. I don't know that I believe that Weer would have voiced his suspicions at this point, as I don't see how he could have any proof, so I don't buy a Faustian pact at this point. Maybe after the coldhouse incident.

I also think (for reasons connected with the Doris story, which I'll put in my next posting), that Smart had to be dead by the time Charles Turner spoke with Weer, which means it is very likely that Weer inherited when Smart died. But alternatively, the terms of the pact could have been that Weer inherited from Smart (which he would likely have done anyway, if he was Smart's closest living relative).

-- Stone Ox

StoneOx17 — 15 Oct 2002, 19:50 · follows StoneOx17

On Tue, 15 Oct 2002, Roy C. Lackey wrote:
You meant, it was Smart who bought the Dresden figure for Olivia. I didn't know that no one had found the hand reference in Ludwig's bio. Strange. Maybe it has something to do with one of Smart's shoulders being "noticeably larger than the other". In depictions of Napoleon, is the shoulder corresponding to the hand in his waistcoat elevated higher than the other, making it look bigger? Anyone know?

-Roy

There's another possible reason for one of Smart's shoulders to be higher than the other. Mr. Tilly seems to have killed his dogs, wife, and son with side effects of the "medicines" he was testing on them. If he was trying out his new "hunchback medicine" on his assistant before he died, this could account for Smart's shoulders.

It seems like this should have taken more than five days, but I've argued before that part of Smart's story of Mr. Tilly may be a lie (note that Smart is described as having a long nose) and that Mr. Tilly was really poisoned by Smart.

Stone Ox

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Adam Stephanides — 18 Oct 2002, 13:17 · follows StoneOx17

on 10/14/02 4:37 AM, Roy C. Lackey at rclackey at stic.net wrote:
What if that letter, which Weer obviously has knowledge of, implicated Smart in Olivia's death, whether before or after the fact?

[snip]

What if Weer had read that letter? What if the choice not to speak to one another after the funeral was Weer's? That he despised Julius, but with his father's wealth being sapped by the Depression, he took advantage of the situation to make Julius an offer he couldn't refuse? In a Faustian twist, Weer agreed to a fixed term of silent service--say twenty-five years--at the end of which Julius would hand over the company to him and fade away--maybe to join the circus or live on the beach in Florida. Smart would have accumulated a handsome personal fortune by then, enough to live out his days in comfort. Smart would have only been in his early sixties when Weer took over his company. People just assume that Smart had to die in order for Weer to gain control of the company, and that he did die. But the text doesn't ever say that Smart died, or even hint at it. And during those twenty-five years Weer would be guaranteed a living wage.

An interesting speculation; but it strikes me as unlikely that, had Weer been in a position to blackmail Smart in his youth, he would have chosen to live in poverty for twenty-five years and collect only in his fifties, rather than ensure a comfortable living now. (Not to mention that your scenario would provide Smart ample time to dispose of the Weer "problem" in other ways.) I'm inclined to agree with mantis: Smart was president and Weer a lowly engineer, they hadn't hit it off at Olivia's, and once Olivia was dead, there was no reason for them to stay in contact. As for why Weer inherited, Smart did have other relatives, but they were distant; and he may have preferred to leave the factory to someone who knew the business, though related only by marriage, rather than a distant relative by blood who might wreck the business through ignorance.

(It just occurred to me, though: is it certain that Weer did in fact receive the company from Smart, by inheritance or otherwise? Is it possible that he was simply chosen president by the board after Smart's death or retirement, and got rich through his salary (and stock options)? Perhaps he had worked his way up to head of research by that time, and so been in a position to be considered for the presidency; and his connection by marriage to Smart might have also worked in his favor. A quick look at the book didn't turn up anything to rule this out, though I may be forgetting something obvious. At any rate, I have no attachment to this idea; I just throw it out as another possibility.)

--Adam

Roy C. Lackey — 18 Oct 2002, 21:46 · follows Adam Stephanides

Adam wrote:

[snip]

As for why Weer inherited, Smart did have other relatives, but they were distant; and he may have preferred to leave the factory to someone who knew the business, though related only by marriage, rather than a distant relative by blood who might wreck the business through ignorance.

Perhaps; it's just that I have a hard time believing that a man would willingly leave his estate to someone he wouldn't even speak to. I wouldn't allow it to happen; it strikes me as "contrary to

everyday experience".

(It just occurred to me, though: is it certain that Weer did in fact receive the company from Smart, by inheritance or otherwise? Is it possible that he was simply chosen president by the board after Smart's death or retirement, and got rich through his salary (and stock options)? Perhaps he had worked his way up to head of research by that time, and so been in a position to be considered for the presidency; and his connection by marriage to Smart might have also worked in his favor. A quick look at the book didn't turn up anything to rule this out, though I may be forgetting something obvious.

At

any rate, I have no attachment to this idea; I just throw it out as another possibility.)

Neither am I attached to the idea that Smart didn't necessarily die in order for Weer to inherit. It just seems to me that Weer had to have had a good reason for sticking with that dead-end job for twenty-five years. After W.W.II, jobs for a college-educated man in his early thirties shouldn't have been hard to find. So why did Weer stay there?

The theory that Julius was, in effect, blackmailing Weer (in the wake of the coldhouse prank) to get him to work for slave wages, if true, might have given Julius some vindictive satisfaction, but it would have had little impact on the bottom line. One cheap laborer, more or less, was insignificant, given the large number of employees at the plant. Also, if Julius was that petty, that's all the more reason to doubt he would willingly leave the company to Weer.

And the company was Weer's. He wasn't just president; he was also "board chairman and chief stockholder" (108). The board of a corporation is not in a legal position to bequeath a majority of its stock to an employee, even if the board were inclined to do so, which isn't likely. If Smart died intestate, which I doubt, the courts could have and probably would have found a closer relative. And those relatives would have been clamoring for a chunk of the pie. No, Smart had to have passed the company to Weer legally.

While writing about the construction of his memory mansion, Weer says: "Furthermore I made the mistake, when the company at last came into my hands and I had funds enough to build, of duplicating, or nearly duplicating, certain well-remembered rooms whose furnishings had fallen to me by inheritance." (35) It's that "at last" which makes me inclined to believe that he had reason to believe that he would someday get his hands on Smart's company. That's why I was looking for a reason for him to believe that, and to have stayed with the company for twenty-five years. When Aaron asked if Weer would "come into some stock when Uncle Julius kicks off", Weer's answer isn't an answer. "Do I look like a fair-haired boy?" is just a rhetorical brush off, and the part about Smart not speaking to him for twenty-five years tells me, at least, that Smart wouldn't have put Weer in his will if he could help it.

-Roy

Adam Stephanides — 20 Oct 2002, 13:48 · follows Roy C. Lackey

on 10/18/02 4:46 PM, Roy C. Lackey at rclackey at stic.net wrote:
Adam wrote:
[snip]

As for why Weer inherited, Smart did have other relatives, but they were distant; and he may have preferred to leave the factory to someone who knew the business, though related only by marriage, rather than a distant relative by blood who might wreck the business through ignorance.

Perhaps; it's just that I have a hard time believing that a man would willingly leave his estate to someone he wouldn't even speak to. I wouldn't allow it to happen; it strikes me as "contrary to everyday experience".

If he doesn't speak to Weer because of loathing, yes. If, as I and mantis have argued, they just don't have occasion to speak to each other, then it's not so strange, given that we don't know of any other relatives Smart speaks to. In any case, your scenario seems more unlikely to me, especially given the added twist of Smart as serial killer who lets his blackmailer live untouched for twenty-five years.

Neither am I attached to the idea that Smart didn't necessarily die in order for Weer to inherit. It just seems to me that Weer had to have had a good reason for sticking with that dead-end job for twenty-five years. After W.W.II, jobs for a college-educated man in his early thirties shouldn't have been hard to find. So why did Weer stay there?

If Weer is blackmailing Julius to get the company when Julius was sixty-something, why does he have to stick around if he can get a better job elsewhere?

And the company was Weer's. He wasn't just president; he was also "board chairman and chief stockholder" (108).

Well, a "chief stockholder" isn't necessarily a majority stockholder, just the individual with the most shares. And if Weer is indeed the owner of the company, than why doesn't the doctor (or Weer speaking through the doctor) just say "owner"?

The board of a corporation is not in a legal position to bequeath a majority of its stock to an employee, even if the board were inclined to do so, which isn't likely.

As I said above, it doesn't have to be a majority. And the board of a corporation can grant stock options to an executive; I believe they can even issue new stock and give that to their executives. Or Weer could have bought the stock himself from his salary as president and board chairman. But, as I said before, I'm not attached to this scenario; I just present it as one possible solution.

While writing about the construction of his memory mansion, Weer says: "Furthermore I made the mistake, when the company at last came into my hands and I had funds enough to build, of duplicating, or nearly duplicating, certain well-remembered rooms whose furnishings had fallen to me by inheritance." (35) It's that "at last" which makes me inclined to believe that he had reason to believe that he would someday get his hands on Smart's company.

Perhaps; but if he was lying by implication to Aaron about inheriting from Smart, he could also have been lying about not having spoken to Smart.

Another objection to your scenario just occurred to me: if Weer were indeed blackmailing Smart, and if the payoff were not to come for twenty-five years, is it really likely that Weer would not once in those years have approached Smart to remind Smart of his hold over him, and make sure Smart hadn't changed his mind?

--Adam

David DiGiacomo — 21 Oct 2002, 02:27 · follows Adam Stephanides

(B) And then there's the question of Olivia's infidelities. How could Weer, a boy, be aware that she was having sex with both Peacock and Macafee, and Julius not be? When Weer wrote that "--when she was Mrs. Smart--repent three or four times a year of her casual connection with Professor Peacock and her occasional nights with Mr. Macafee", did he mean that he was present when she confessed to Julius?

This is saying that the repentance took place after her marriage, not the sex. I don't see any evidence of infidelity in the passage.

Roy C. Lackey — 21 Oct 2002, 05:17 · follows David DiGiacomo

David DiGiacomo quoted and wrote:

(B) And then there's the question of Olivia's infidelities. How could Weer, a boy, be aware that she was having sex with both Peacock and Macafee, and Julius not be? When Weer wrote that "--when she was Mrs. Smart--repent three or four times a year of her casual connection with Professor Peacock and her occasional nights with Mr. Macafee", did he mean that he was present when she confessed to Julius?

This is saying that the repentance took place after her marriage, not the sex. I don't see any evidence of infidelity in the passage.

Remember the infamous "leather-covered couch"? Weer wondered ". . .if Mr. Macafee had ever been able to explain to himself why my aunt, who had been impossible of access before her marriage, had become so easy after . . ." (180) In fact, it was while crossing Main Street after one such tryst, from Macafee's store to Dubarry's Bakery, that she was killed by Peacock.

-Roy