

PEACE: Doris

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Oct 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3487>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

StoneOx17 — 16 Oct 2002, 14:11

I think I've figured out another piece of the Doris puzzle. I was going to wait until I'd thought through its ramifications further before posting, but when I saw Roy's speculations about Julius, I decided I might as well post now, since it bears on to the question of, when Weer inherited the factory, whether Julius had died or merely retired.

I argued before that when Charles Turner visited Weer, he was actually trying to meet Julius Smart (the previous president), and that he wanted to buy some of Mr. Tilly's carney medicines from Julius, who took over Mr. Tilly's practice. But who was the medicine for? When Julius treated Charles as a baby, it appears that one course of the hair medicine is good for life, so Charles shouldn't need any refills (and indeed, from his letter to Weer, he doesn't seem to be losing any hair after he fails to procure the medicine). The only other person mentioned in the letter who might have benefitted from one of the carney medicines is Tom Lavine, the 7' 6" Canadian giant, and he isn't going to start shrinking if he fails to get the medicine. So who does Charles want the medicine for? My suggestion is that it's for Doris.

Here's the story as I've reconstructed it. Charles has gotten to know Doris and has fallen in love with her. Their ages are inappropriate for a relationship (he's over 40, and she can't be more than 16 -- shades of Lolita), so he doesn't try to seduce her, but he does want to help her. His first plan is to get some medicine from Julius Smart and turn her into a circus freak. However, this plan fails when he reaches Cassionsville and learns that Julius is dead and has been succeeded by Weer, who, he ascertains without revealing much, doesn't know about Julius' carney medicine practice. He then goes to dinner with Weer, and pours his heart out about Doris' situation. Together they come up with an alternate plan: set Doris up with Tom Lavine. (He apparently doesn't think of the more practical alternative of just giving Doris getaway money and letting her escape, possibly because he doesn't want to lose her, or possibly because he can't imagine life outside the circus.) This fails miserably, and Charles writes the letter to Weer.

How does this fit in with the rest of the novel? For one thing, there's a very interesting parallel of Doris and Charles with Sherry and Weer. The girls are both around 16, and the men are both a little over 40. I don't know what this parallel means, though. Does Sherry commit suicide? It doesn't seem likely. Another thing it implies is that Julius is dead when Charles meets Weer, as otherwise he would have gone looking for Julius rather than adapting his alternative plan, so I think we can conclude that Weer inherited from Julius after his death, either because Julius died intestate and Weer was his closest living relative or because Julius named Weer in his will.

Any more thoughts on what this means?

- Stone Ox