

AEG clones

The Urth list — 61 messages, 11 voices, 13 Dec 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5278>

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.

Roy C. Lackey — 13 Dec 2008, 20:55

Given my past antipathy for clone theories, I hesitate to even bring up the subject, but it's mentioned in the book (p.-296) and I have a sinking feeling.

Reis thought dying was a bummer, but inevitable. (pp 268-269)

Cassie never actually saw Rian. Wolfe makes a point of having her tell Klauser that she had to call Rian to tell him that his father was dead. (296) This was right after Klauser had expressed some doubt about whether Reis was really dead or not.

Klauser, looking at the aged Cassie, asked about the "Casey girl" that Reis was going to marry, the one he had seen on vid. Cassie said, "She's gone, too." "She's passed away, but I'm hoping to bring her back." Klauser then said, "I believe I understand that as well. You won't want to say anything more about it." (296) This was right after he mentioned the anticloning laws.

Klauser asked if Cassie had always been so skinny, then said "Your genes will control your weight, unless you get as sick as I am or starve. I . . . " (300) Then he thinks to give her that picture of his healthier, heavier self and "A younger William Reis than she had ever seen". (301)

He had lost weight because he was sick; she had lost weight because she had nearly starved on that island, but neither of them was genetically predisposed to being skinny.

I believe Klauser suspected that the aged woman he was talking to was actually the same "Casey girl" he had seen on vid, because when she mentioned having shot a man on the night of the storm, he asked if that man had been Reis. (299) That, or he thought that one woman was a clone of the other.

Anyway, when you put this all together in the context of cloning, I suspect that the image of the much younger Reis in the picture would have a striking similarity to young Rian. I don't know if Cassie's upcoming trip to Woldercan is related to cloning.

I don't know if clones have any bearing on Gid and his father. And I don't know what, if anything, the subject of clones has to do with the larger story--but it must be there for a reason.

-Roy

James Wynn — 14 Dec 2008, 05:38 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Given my past antipathy for clone theories, I hesitate to even bring up the subject, but it's mentioned in the book (p.-296) and I have a sinking feeling.

I have absolutely no aversion to clone theories per se, yet I think I can give you heartening news that I don't think any of this means Rian is a clone. Klauser IMO thinks Ries's fiance was a

clone-daughter of the woman he is talking to in his living room. When she says she wants to bring her back, he presumes she means to create a new clone. She would not want to say more about it because it is an illegal activity.

Given that as an explanation (which I think is accurate), is there anything said that would be clarified by Rian being a clone of Bill Reis? I can't think of anything. I know you don't doubt me when I say I actually wish I could. Another thing, weight is to some extent biologically driven, but so are heart defects. Now Reis **might** had this sort of thing as a child or he might not. We aren't told. Maybe in a sequel. But I'll bet in that sequel, Rian is the high king of Takanga.

On the other hand, to have Cassie **never** meet Rian **is** suspicious in a Wolfe novel. There were innumerable opportunities before she came to the island and during her stay for Wolfe to have them meet (yes, I know we never meet Herbie either, but this is different.). But the picture of a younger Bill Reis is not telling, since Rian is sixteen and the youngest picture she's seen of Bill is when he's at probably twice that age, I'm not sure the picture would have raised any eyebrows. But, while Wolfe has left room to allow Rian to be revealed as a clone or any number of other things a sequel, I'm don't see anything **yet** that actually tips us toward that.

J

Roy C. Lackey — 14 Dec 2008, 09:52 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

I have absolutely no aversion to clone theories per se, yet I think I can give you heartening news that I don't think any of this means Rian is a clone. Klauser IMO thinks Ries's fiance was a clone-daughter of the woman he is talking to in his living room.

I mentioned that he might have thought that.

When she says she wants to bring her back, he presumes she means to create a new clone. She would not want to say more > about it because it is an illegal activity.

Yeah, but it was Klauser who brought up the subject, and he brought it up **before** she said she wanted to bring back the Casey girl. In between, he asked if Bill was dead. After Cassie said she wanted to bring back the girl is when he said that he thought he understood that "as well." As well as what?

Given that as an explanation (which I think is accurate), is there anything said that would be clarified by Rian being a clone of Bill Reis? I can't think of anything. I know you don't doubt me when I say I actually wish I could.

I know. <g> As for clearing anything up, it might lend Reis' dying words something more than mere poetic sentiment. (283)

Another thing, weight is to some extent biologically driven, but so are heart defects.

And today's animal clones have sometimes turned out to have subtle defects that have led to premature death.

[snip]

On the other hand, to have Cassie **never** meet Rian **is** suspicious in a Wolfe novel.

Very.

There were innumerable opportunities before she came to the island and during her stay for Wolfe to have them meet (yes, I know we never meet Herbie either, but this is different.). But the picture of a younger Bill Reis is not telling, since Rian is sixteen and the youngest picture she's seen of Bill is when he's at probably twice that age, I'm not sure the picture would have raised any eyebrows. But, while Wolfe has left room to allow Rian to be revealed as a clone or any number of other things a sequel, I'm don't see anything *yet* that actually tips us toward that.

You know I don't have a smoking gun, or I would have shown it. But there are a few other things I chose not to bring up because I can explain them away, one more easily than the others. That one is where Reis told Cassie, "I'm so good [as a businessman] that I often need to pretend to be somebody else. There are antitrust laws, for one thing. There are other reasons as well." (120) That might mean nothing. Might. But the other things Wolfe went out of his way to include.

The waitress at Rusterman's who looked like Alexis Cabana asked Cassie if she was really there to meet Mr. Rosenquist, and said that he was a friend of Mr. Rusterman. When Cassie asked if there was a real Mr. Rusterman, she said: "He's the company president. There was another Mr. Rusterman years and years ago, and he opened the first one. But now this Mr. Rusterman is president of our whole chain. He's a cousin or something." (118) Cousin indeed. We know that Rusterman is really Reis.

Also at Rusterman's, Reis said:

"You were wearing green the first time I saw you."

"In the play? I wasn't. That was brown."

"So it was. I was thinking of the party. I took you home, remember?" Cassie nodded. "Thank you. You saw _The Red Spot_, though. The final performance." "I didn't. I know I said I did, but that was . . ." "Diplomacy?" "Yes, exactly. India had given me tickets, and I didn't want to admit I hadn't used them."(119)

Diplomacy? Cassie had seen him in the audience (53), and at the cast party he said he had been there. (66) So was he lying then or now? Sure, his first sight of her could have been on vid; he demonstrated the capability to her three months later in his car. But Gid had put the glamour on her less than twenty-four hours before that final performance. So who did she see in the audience?

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 14 Dec 2008, 12:26 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I'm not too convinced of the Rian-clone theory, but another bit of evidence is his name. It means "Little King." Since Ries is the King, it seems like a "Mini-me" sort of name.

Diplomacy? Cassie had seen him in the audience (53), and at the cast party he said he had been there. (66) So was he lying then or now? Sure, his first sight of her could have been on vid; he demonstrated the capability to her three months later in his car. But Gid had put the glamour on her less than twenty-four hours before that final performance. So who did she see in the audience?

Ries was telling her a lot of lies at that point; his accounts of the gold bracelet were highly contradictory. He didn't know that she knew he could walk unseen, or that she caught a glimpse of him at the play. The lie kept explanations simple. The alternative of a clone (artificially aged to be Bill's double and also taught to walk unseen) is too much.

The waitress at Rusterman's who looked like Alexis Cabana asked Cassie if she was really there to meet Mr. Rosenquist, and said that he was a friend of Mr. Rusterman. When Cassie asked if there was a real Mr. Rusterman, she said: "He's the company president. There was another Mr. Rusterman years and years ago, and he opened the first one. But now this Mr. Rusterman is president of our whole chain. He's a cousin or something." (118) Cousin indeed. We know that Rusterman is really Reis.

The waitress may be repeating what she was told. We know that the real founder of Rusterman's was Marko Vukcic, the childhood friend of Nero Wolfe in Montenegro.

James Wynn — 14 Dec 2008, 17:44 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

The waitress at Rusterman's who looked like Alexis Cabana asked Cassie if she was really there to meet Mr. Rosenquist, and said that he was a friend of Mr. Rusterman.[...]Cousin indeed. We know that Rusterman is really Reis.

Also at Rusterman's, Reis said:

"You were wearing green the first time I saw you."

"In the play? I wasn't. That was brown."

"So it was. I was thinking of the party. I took you home, remember?"

Cassie nodded. "Thank you. You saw _The Red Spot_, though. The final performance."

"I didn't. I know I said I did, but that was . . ."

"Diplomacy?"

"Yes, exactly. India had given me tickets, and I didn't want to admit I hadn't used them."(119)

Diplomacy? Cassie had seen him in the audience (53), and at the cast party he said he had been there. (66) So was he lying then or now? So who did she see in the audience?

Well, well, well, Roy. Now we are getting someplace. Welcome. We've been expecting you. (bwahahaha) You see, after Norma's murder, she reflects on the cops query about who would want to kill her:

"She had said, 'Nobody! Nobody at all,' but now, as she prepared for bed, she wondered whether that answer had been the right one. Bill Ries was a murderer and Wally Rosenquist was Bill Reis. But her? Did you give diamond bracelets to women you meant to murder." (181)

This is a motif of Wolfe's that occurs from with regularity: The protagonist knows that someone is ostensibly operating merely under another alias but behaves as if it makes the him a different person. Or the protagonist recognizes two separate personalities as the same in some bizarre way for bizarre reasons. If Wally and Bill are truly the same person, then Cassie's mental wrangling is irrational. Crazy.

But what if Cassie is on to something without realizing it? What if the guy who gave Cassie the gold bracelet and the guy who gave her the diamond one are **not** the same person. What if the guy who took the deadly gold bracelet back were not the guy who gave it to her? What if Wally R. is **not** the fellow that the President called one of the most evil men in the world? What if the Rusterman cousin is **not** the same person as Rosenquist or Reis? That clarifies a lot. Well, actually, it doesn't. But it opens the possibility of clarifying a lot. Okay. You've convinced me. We have ourselves a clone story here.

J.

Roy C. Lackey — 14 Dec 2008, 22:29 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman quoted and wrote:

Diplomacy? Cassie had seen him in the audience (53), and at the cast party he said he had been there. (66) So was he lying then or now? Sure, his first sight of her could have been on vid; he demonstrated the capability to her three months later in his car. But Gid had put the glamour on her less than twenty-four hours before that final performance. So who did she see in the audience?

Reis was telling her a lot of lies at that point; his accounts of the gold bracelet were highly contradictory. He didn't know that she knew he could walk unseen, or that she caught a glimpse of him at the play. The lie kept explanations simple. The alternative of a clone (artificially aged to be Bill's double and also taught to walk unseen) is too much.

Why put himself in a position to be caught in a lie that served no purpose? Why did Wolfe put that bit of conversation in the story?

The waitress at Rusterman's who looked like Alexis Cabana asked Cassie if she was really there to meet Mr. Rosenquist, and said that he was a friend of Mr. Rusterman. When Cassie asked if there was a real Mr. Rusterman, she said: "He's the company president. There was another Mr. Rusterman years and years ago, and he opened the first one. But now this Mr. Rusterman is president of our whole chain. He's a cousin or something." (118) Cousin indeed. We know that Rusterman is really Reis.

The waitress may be repeating what she was told. We know that the real founder of Rusterman's was Marko Vukcic, the childhood friend of Nero Wolfe in Montenegro.

I'm not familiar with Nero Wolfe, so I can't address that part. But Cassie went on to address Reis as Wade, which was Rusterman's given name. He said, "Call me Wally, please. I prefer it. Here." (120) Had Reis merely wanted to own a restaurant chain, he could have bought it and kept the franchise name but purchased it under some name other than Rusterman. That would have avoided the whole "cousin" angle. Maybe someone felt it necessary to invent the cousin story to offer a plausible reason for an uncanny resemblance between company presidents. Or to explain why the current president had not aged as much as he should have after "years and years".

Anyway, if there are no clones in the story, why did Wolfe bring up the subject in the last chapter? If he hadn't, I wouldn't have brought this topic up. I hate clone theories. <g>

-Roy

stoneox17 at aol.com — 14 Dec 2008, 22:46 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey <rclackey at stic.net> writes

=====

Also at Rusterman's, Reis said:

"You were wearing green the first time I saw you."

"In the play? I wasn't. That was brown."

"So it was. I was thinking of the party. I took you home, remember?" Cassie nodded. "Thank you. You saw _The Red Spot_, though. The final performance." "I didn't. I know I said I did, but that was . . ." "Diplomacy?" "Yes, exactly. India had given me tickets, and I didn't want to admit I hadn't used them."(119)

Diplomacy? Cassie had seen him in the audience (53), and at the cast party he said he had been there. (66) So was he lying then or now? Sure, his first sight of her could have been on vid; he demonstrated the capability to her three months later in his car. But Gid had put the glamour on her less than twenty-four hours before that final performance. So who did she see in the audience?

=====

I have a theory here. At first, Cassie looks out at the audience from a peephole, and doesn't see Reis. While she is onstage, she glances out and sees him, and later, she looks out from the peephole again and doesn't see him (52-53). This is all in the chapter titled "The Unseen Audience." My theory is that Reis was there the whole time, but he was using his powers of invisibility, and somehow, while she is onstage, Cassie's glamour enable her to see him, but it only works while she's acting.

This seems more likely than Reis having snuck in and out during the performance unnoticed (although he could have used his powers for that as well.

So the reason that Reis claims he wasn't there is that he has no idea anyone was able to see him.

Peter

Dave Tallman — 14 Dec 2008, 22:54 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

But what if Cassie is on to something without realizing it? What if the guy who gave Cassie the gold bracelet and the guy who gave her the diamond one are **not** the same person. What if the guy who took the deadly gold bracelet back were not the guy who gave it to her? What if Wally R. is **not** the fellow that the President called one of the most evil men in the world? What if the Rusterman cousin is **not** the same person as Rosenquist or Reis? That clarifies a lot. Well, actually, it doesn't. But it opens the possibility of clarifying a lot. Okay. You've convinced me. We have ourselves a clone story here.

Reis admits to Cassie early on that he started out trying to entrap and destroy her (pp. 125, 145). He eventually admits that the gold bracelet was radioactive (p. 270). "(Reis) The gold I gave you made you think of that first bracelet... (Cassie) We've already talked a little about the gold. Radioactive gold... (Reis) We have."

So it's not surprising that he told her lies about it at first. He said it was "Eighteen karat, which means it's pretty soft" (p. 67). Eighteen karat gold is only 75% gold, and jewelry made with it

need not be soft, depending on what metals it's mixed with. Later he says it weighed ten ounces, and the German craftsman used all ten ounces of the gold Reis gave him (p. 122). In other words, it was 100% gold (24 karat), and that would indeed be soft. He was maximizing the harm it could do her, though that couldn't have been his whole plan to destroy her.

At the party, he claimed he had made it months ago and only decided whom to give it to after seeing Cassie in the play (p. 67). From what we know above, that was also a lie.

The odd thing is the timing of his change of heart. He knew he had made a mistake when he saw her coming up to the microphone to get the gold bracelet (p. 145). He persisted for a little while out of stubbornness, but scrapped his plan while they sat together in the car that first night they met (p. 145). But if it was indeed Reis who saw at least a little of the play, why didn't her glamour start charming him out of his plan earlier?

The man at the play (p. 53) was possibly Bill's clone, double by magical illusion, or shape-changing werewolf. That man was most likely the one who waited in the alley to give Cassie something, and who bribed Jimmy one hundred dollars to carry a message to her (p. 56). Jimmy died shortly after that (p. 65), possibly scared to death by the man.

Simpler, though, would be the idea that Bill was there too briefly to be affected deeply, or that he was present only by hologram and got a diminished glamour effect. He could be the man in the alley himself.

Dave Tallman — 15 Dec 2008, 00:27 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Why put himself in a position to be caught in a lie that served no purpose?

Why did Wolfe put that bit of conversation in the story?

If Bill was actually in the "empty" seat the whole time, then perhaps "You were wearing green the first time I saw you," is a lie and yet not a lie. During the play Cassie was projecting Mildred, the soon-to-be murder victim. When he saw her in green she was herself.

I also think her love glamour worked through proximity. Bill started changing his mind about destroying her when she came up to the microphone, and completely dumped the idea when she sat beside him in the car. The distance from the stage to his seat was too far for him to get the full effect.

So, suppose he sat through the whole play, invisible. There are a couple of good reasons for changing his story. The first is that Cassie or Chase might have checked with the ushers and found out his reserved seat was empty. Reis had to say he lied about being there or admit he walked invisible. More importantly, he didn't want to be associated with the death of her friend Jimmy. If he admitted being there, he would be admitting he could be the man in the alley who bribed Jimmy and possibly murdered him. That wouldn't be a good start to his intended relationship.

Maybe someone felt it necessary to invent the cousin story to offer a plausible reason for an uncanny resemblance between company presidents. Or to explain why the current president had not aged as much as he should have after "years and years".

Possibly. I still think we are invited to check the history of the Rusterman name in the Nero Wolfe books and see if it was merely an invented name to avoid annoying xenophobic Americans with a strange name like "Vukcic's." (I don't have the books handy now). If so, this cousin stuff is just an in-joke.

Anyway, if there are no clones in the story, why did Wolfe bring up the subject in the last chapter? If he hadn't, I wouldn't have brought this topic up. I hate clone theories. <g

Clones in other Wolfe works are a sign of a failing, narcissistic society ("Cherry Jubilee", and especially "In Looking-Glass Castle"). We know that natural children are barely valued (the bus accident report and the Supreme Court ruling about infanticide on p. 86). That may be enough of a reason to include them, without having an actual clone in the plot.

James Wynn — 15 Dec 2008, 01:23 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Sigh. Tsk tsk tsk.

Here comes a litany of elaborate theories for each of a series of pointless "lies" Reis/Rosenquist/Rusterman tells a when a single global explanation stands a decent chance of explaining it all. Why? Because it is aesthetically unappealing (to some). Personally, I find a single leap to explain many mysteries more aesthetically appealing than a dozen leaps and buying offs on lame excuses by Reis to explain a dozen strange lies.

Look, Reis says that he saw Cassie for the first time wearing a green dress at the party. He says he didn't see the final performance of "The Red Spot". Even though we know he saw her in the play. What possible reason could he have to lie to Cassie about that? Maybe he found the truth aesthetically unappealing?

J.

stoneox17 at aol.com — 15 Dec 2008, 04:04 · in reply to stoneox17 at aol.com

Everybody: thanks for the great discussion on rereading AEG.

I think I've discovered another clue: Gideon is a phenomenal hypnotist. Here's the evidence:

Talking with the president, Gideon says:

"There is even hypnosis, with which a skillful operator can do much more than the public has been led to believe." (20)

and at the mountain (all but the last ellipsis are mine):

""Sit down." Gideon sat on a smaller stone facing hers. ... She found that she was seated, although she had not intended to sit. ...

""The first thing I must explain is how badly you need sleep. ... I want you to sleep in the car as we drive home. You should sleep all morning, if you can. I know you must be very, very tired" Behind him: great, dark wings." (43)

And indeed, Cassie does sleep through the ride back, and wakes up just in time for lunch at Walker's.

So where does hypnotism (maybe post-hypnotic suggestion) reappear later in the book?

Peter?

Dave Tallman — 15 Dec 2008, 08:08 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

Look, Reis says that he saw Cassie for the first time wearing a green dress

at the party. He says he didn't see the final performance of "The Red Spot". Even though we know he saw her in the play. What possible reason could he have to lie to Cassie about that? Maybe he found the truth aesthetically unappealing?

How much a person lies and why gives important insights into his or her character. Cassie lies compulsively, even in situations where the other person knows she is lying ("I won the lottery. That's the total, absolute, brass-bound truth" p. 120), and when she was specifically warned not to lie ("If anyone asks, tell them the absolute truth about my coming here today and my leaving here" (p. 94). "He hasn't been in contact..." (p. 124)).

Reis seems to be different. He lies only for calculated reasons, and expects he'll have to admit the truth eventually. When Cassie calls him "Bill" and asks if he found anything in her apartment, he says she has saved him weeks and admits the search (p. 119). So you're right, I prefer to find logical explanations for his lies rather than say that he simply felt like it.

Dave Tallman — 15 Dec 2008, 08:19 · in reply to stoneox17 at aol.com

Stoneox17 wrote:
So where does hypnotism (maybe post-hypnotic suggestion) reappear later in the book?

Cassie appears to be much more honest in reporting things to Chase than to any other person. You can always count on her to lie, at least by omission, to anyone else. That might be post-hypnotic suggestion.

Here's another one I'm curious about, though it happens before the mountain hypnosis. Sharon tells Cassie that thinking about lipstick names puts her to sleep (p. 24). Then Aaberg tells her "Got to watch that one. It'll put you to sleep" (p. 30). Minutes later, she has fallen deeply asleep in Chase's car. Normally a person who goes out armed to a risky encounter in the middle of the night in a bad neighborhood with a stranger who might not be who they say they are wouldn't fall asleep just like that. Was some form of hypnotic suggestion involved?

James Wynn — 16 Dec 2008, 03:25 · follows Dave Tallman

What if the guy who gave Cassie the gold bracelet and the guy who gave her the diamond one are *not* the same person. What if the guy who took the deadly gold bracelet back were not the guy who gave it to her? What if Wally R. is *not* the fellow that the President called one of the most evil men in the world? What if the Rusterman cousin is *not* the same person as Rosenquist or Reis?

I just remembered something else that tips the balance in favor of Roy's clone theory. When the President is briefing Chase:

[The president says] "...come in, John! I said if there was only one evil man in the world, it'd have to be Bill Reis. There's a hell of a lot of evil men in the world." "Three in particular", the man the president called John added. "We haven't gotten to that yet, John, and I don't think we will." The president motioned toward a chair. "Sit down." "My error, Mr. President, I didn't know we were excluding the Senate."

The president's reaction to John's "Three" comment suggests something substantial that the president doesn't want to share with Chase. John's comment about the Senate is certainly a joke to cover his speaking out of turn. So if Bill Reis is one of the evil men in the world who are the other two that John referred to? Wally Rosenquist and Wade Rusterman? So are we talking

about three separate men here?

J.

Dave Tallman — 16 Dec 2008, 22:12 · in reply to James Wynn

More candidates for the three most evil men in the world:

- 1) The man who set up the illusion-cult tomb in "Memorare" (his statue looks like Gene Wolfe).
- 2) King Kanoa, probably a major Cthulhu-cult leader.
- 3) Real Senators known to the president, if John wasn't joking.

John Watkins — 16 Dec 2008, 22:21 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Another, maybe too obvious, three candidates are Gideon Chase, the president, and the man the president calls John. Note that "John" isn't saying the three men are the "three most evil"--he's responding to the President's claim that "There's a hell of a lot of evil men in the world" by saying that "three in particular" are at issue--why not the three in the room? Is Wolfe telling us, up front, by means of what might be "John's" practiced cynicism, that Chase and the US government are on the side of the devils?

On 12/16/08, Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com> wrote:
More candidates for the three most evil men in the world:

- 1) The man who set up the illusion-cult tomb in "Memorare" (his statue looks like Gene Wolfe).
- 2) King Kanoa, probably a major Cthulhu-cult leader.
- 3) Real Senators known to the president, if John wasn't joking.

Dave Tallman — 18 Dec 2008, 12:24 · follows John Watkins

James Wynn wrote:

So if Bill Reis is one of the evil men in the world who are the other two that John referred to?

Wally Rosenquist and Wade Rusterman? So are we talking about three separate men here?

I'm still unsure, but the idea is growing on me a little. There's the odd change of names at the end: "Oh Bill, my poor Bill. Why did you have to die?"..."Please, oh please Wally! Come back to me!" This makes sense if Cassie has figured out that they are two different people.

Another way to get doubles other than cloning is by time-travel. If a person hopped to Woldercon, there's a possibility that they could return before they left. Early on, Reis shows uncanny speed in reacting to Cassie's recruitment by Chase. He gets a play book written, a bracelet made, and a director in place before she has even performed once at star level. Time-travel might explain this.

On the other hand, if Bill Reis had clones or temporal doubles who were working with him, then we would expect them to help him when he needed to be in two places at once. We have a case where it would have been convenient for this to have happened and it didn't: the date with Cassie at Rusterman's. Reis wanted to go out with her and also search her apartment. If he had a co-operative double, why not do both and give himself an alibi for the search?

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 18 Dec 2008, 17:36 · in reply to Dave Tallman

A third possiblity is that the President did not know that Reise, Rosinquist and Rusterman were the same person.

On Thu, Dec 18, 2008 at 4:24 AM, Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com> wrote:
James Wynn wrote:

So if Bill Reis is one of the evil men in the world who are the other two that John referred to?

Wally Rosenquist and Wade Rusterman? So are we talking about three separate men here?

I'm still unsure, but the idea is growing on me a little. There's the odd change of names at the end:

"Oh Bill, my poor Bill. Why did you have to die?"..."Please, oh please Wally! Come back to me!" This makes sense if Cassie has figured out that they are two different people.

Another way to get doubles other than cloning is by time-travel. If a person hopped to Woldercon, there's a possibility that they could return before they left. Early on, Reis shows uncanny speed in reacting to Cassie's recruitment by Chase. He gets a play book written, a bracelet made, and a director in place before she has even performed once at star level. Time-travel might explain this.

On the other hand, if Bill Reis had clones or temporal doubles who were working with him, then we would expect them to help him when he needed to be in two places at once. We have a case where it would have been convenient for this to have happened and it didn't: the date with Cassie at Rusterman's. Reis wanted to go out with her and also search her apartment. If he had a co-operative double, why not do both and give himself an alibi for the search?

John Watkins — 18 Dec 2008, 18:30 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Another way to get doubles other than cloning is by time-travel. If a person hopped to Woldercon, there's a possibility that they could return before they left. Early on, Reis shows uncanny speed in reacting to Cassie's recruitment by Chase. He gets a play book written, a bracelet made, and a director in place before she has even performed once at star level. Time-travel might explain this.

Did Reis write the play for Cassie? I was of the impression that Chase knew about Reis's play, and made Cassie into a star in order to infiltrate the play, but I don't know why it is I think this.

Dave Tallman — 18 Dec 2008, 19:44 · follows John Watkins

John Watkins wrote:

Did Reis write the play for Cassie? I was of the impression that Chase knew about Reis's play, and made Cassie into a star in order to infiltrate the play, but I don't know why it is I think this.

I had the impression he wrote it for her (as part of a trap, initially). Reis seems to admit it here: "I'm financing the show you're in as a vehicle for you, Cassie." (p. 144). I believe it was meant to send a message to Chase: "You think you can recruit someone to spy on me? Look how quickly I

can entrap and destroy her. You'd better join my side."

Roy C. Lackey — 18 Dec 2008, 22:26 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman quoted and wrote:

Why put himself in a position to be caught in a lie that served no purpose?

Why did Wolfe put that bit of conversation in the story?

If Bill was actually in the "empty" seat the whole time, then perhaps "You were wearing green the first time I saw you," is a lie and yet not a lie. During the play Cassie was projecting Mildred, the soon-to-be murder victim. When he saw her in green she was herself.

I also think her love glamour worked through proximity. Bill started changing his mind about destroying her when she came up to the microphone, and completely dumped the idea when she sat beside him in the car. The distance from the stage to his seat was too far for him to get the full effect.

Regardless of exactly when or why Reis had a change of heart, Cassie saw him in the audience and he stated at the cast party that he had seen the play.

So, suppose he sat through the whole play, invisible. There are a couple of good reasons for changing his story. The first is that Cassie or Chase might have checked with the ushers and found out his reserved seat was empty.

What reserved seat? The theater wasn't anywhere near full and she saw Reis in the second row, not the first, where a reserved seat would be.

I don't know if it is relevant (Wolfe might have made a mistake), but there is a ticket discrepancy. At the cast party Reis said that India had given him "a ticket". (66) At Rusterman's he said India had given him "tickets, and I didn't want to admit I hadn't used them." (119)

Reis had to say he lied about being there or admit he walked invisible.

Gid (or someone) had already told her that Reis "walks unseen" in the note written on the back of one of the pictures he left her the night before the play. (44) With that in mind, go back and read carefully the bit at the top of page 21, as he was leaving the White House. On a sunny day. If I were a rabid clone theorist, I would also start wondering about John's glasses (15) and Gid's cryptic little dig at him about optics. (19) And why Reis wears glasses only in some photos. He was wearing glasses when she saw him in the audience.

More importantly, he didn't want to be associated with the death of her friend Jimmy. If he admitted being there, he would be admitting he could be the man in the alley who bribed Jimmy and possibly murdered him. That wouldn't be a good start to his intended relationship.

There is no way Reis could have avoided being associated with Jimmy. He, or his proxy, had been the big guy who sent Jimmy to Cassie with the message about the gift, right after the play ended. She got the message and sent Jimmy with a reply, and Reis knew it. It was a very foolish thing for him to have brought up the subject again at all, much less to contradict himself over such a small matter as when he first saw her.

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 18 Dec 2008, 23:45 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

What reserved seat? The theater wasn't anywhere near full and she saw Reis in the second row, not the first, where a reserved seat would be.

By "reserved seat" I really meant "the seat assigned by India's free ticket." Regardless of how full or empty a theater is, patrons normally sit where their ticket says. So this is something Cassie might check. Reis must have thought he was fully invisible the whole time. He had no idea that Cassie's star-power had penetrated his ability to cloud men's minds. If he thought she had checked, then he might choose to change his story.

I don't know if it is relevant (Wolfe might have made a mistake), but there

is a ticket discrepancy. At the cast party Reis said that India had given him "a ticket". (66) At Rusterman's he said India had given him "tickets, and I didn't want to admit I hadn't used them." (119)

I wouldn't worry about the plural discrepancy. India probably gave him two tickets in case he chose to attend with a companion. His story at the party was that he went alone, and hence used only one ticket.

Gid (or someone) had already told her that Reis "walks unseen" in the note

written on the back of one of the pictures he left her the night before the play. (44) With that in mind, go back and read carefully the bit at the top of page 21, as he was leaving the White House. On a sunny day. If I were a rabid clone theorist, I would also start wondering about John's glasses (15)

and Gid's cryptic little dig at him about optics. (19) And why Reis wears glasses only in some photos. He was wearing glasses when she saw him in the audience.

Perhaps Gid can also "walk unseen" when he wants to, and was worried about shadows. A few points about "optics":

- 1) Gid may be referring to the ability to walk unseen, since it is a skill used and taught on Woldercan.
- 2) Since we have laser surgery even today, one would think ordinary glasses to correct vision would be obsolete.
- 3) The assassin says she wears glasses that let her see in the dark (p. 249). John's glasses may be of this type.
- 4) John's glasses are thick (giving the impression of blindness, p. 15) and making eye contact difficult. That might be a precaution against hypnotism.
- 5) The glasses are only seen in the full-length shot (p. 44), perhaps taken without Reis knowing. The close-ups may be posed. Reis may wear glasses in public as a disguise.

Speaking of invisibility, here is a really strange instance. Vince Palma brushes an "invisible yellow feather" from his lips at the party (p. 64). He will wear a headdress of red and yellow feathers as the Volcano God (p.

285). Is he wearing this at the "Red Spot" party, and rendering it invisible by mental powers? He seems to be one powerful guy:

- 1) He knows about Gray Neighbors and banshees (p. 64).
- 2) He plays with Cassie like a cat with a mouse (p. 63).
- 3) He knows Cassie's real name (p. 63), which she is startled to find out that Reis knows later (p. 146).
- 3) His voice makes everything he says sound important (p. 285).

His role in "The Red Spot" is minor (a poor scheming detective p. 63), but Rosenquist picks him out for the Volcano God at once. Who is Vince Palma really? Is he possessed by the Volcano

God, perhaps under the control of Bill Reis? The real Volcano God looks like him when he appears to Cassie, so there seems to be something there...

John Watkins — 19 Dec 2008, 00:13 · in reply to Dave Tallman

On 12/18/08, Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com> wrote:
5) The glasses are only seen in the full-length shot (p. 44), perhaps taken without Reis knowing. The close-ups may be posed. Reis may wear glasses in public as a disguise.

Well, this rings a bell. Pulp of the 1930s, guy with powers who glasses used as a disguise and has a colleague/rival who's a detective and financial wizard with a cool car?

We're looking at Superman.

James Wynn — 19 Dec 2008, 01:05 · in reply to Dave Tallman

He had no idea that Cassie's star-power had penetrated his ability to cloud men's minds. If he thought she had checked, then he might choose to change his story.

Errr...if this is so, why didn't her star power allow her to penetrate it later in the restaurant when she watched him disappear?

Henry Eissler — 19 Dec 2008, 02:43 · in reply to Dave Tallman

It would also make sense if there were two different people inside of Cassie. You were the one that pointed out that Gideon may have infused her with the spirit of the banshee - the Washer at the Ford. I think the Cassie part of Cassie came close to dying on the Volcano God's island, but that last line at the end shows that she's not gone- she's the one that liked to call him "Wally."

As to why Dr. Chase would have wanted to put the spirit of a mountain god's wife into her... who knows.

---H

Dave Tallman wrote:
I'm still unsure, but the idea is growing on me a little. There's the odd change of names at the end:
"Oh Bill, my poor Bill. Why did you have to die?"..."Please, oh please Wally! Come back to me!" This makes sense if Cassie has figured out that they are two different people.

Dave Tallman — 19 Dec 2008, 04:51 · in reply to Henry Eissler

Henry Eissler wrote:
You were the one that pointed out that Gideon may have infused her with the spirit of the banshee - the Washer at the Ford. I think the Cassie part of Cassie came close to dying on the Volcano God's island, but that last line at the end shows that she's not gone- she's the one that liked to call him "Wally."
As to why Dr. Chase would have wanted to put the spirit of a mountain god's wife into her... who knows.

I don't think Cassie was infused with a different spirit. Chase speaks of energizing her innate star potential (p. 41). I pretty much gave up on the "Washer at the Ford" theory after I found another reference that fit better. Here it is, as I wrote it up for WolfeWiki:

* "A mountain whose wife washed clothes?" (pp. 41-42, 83) is a

reference to Someone Comes to Town, Someone Leaves Town

<http://craphound.com/someone/Cory_Doctorow_-_Someone_Comes_to_Town_Someone_Leaves_Town.htm>

by Cory Doctorow. The protagonist Alan's father was a mountain and his mother was a washing machine. Credit for discovering this belongs to Marc Aramini. It's a perfect match:

1. The mountain quakes when it's angry.
2. There are gnomes and golems in its caves.
3. The setting is near Toronto, Canada. (The protagonist goes to Willowdale, a suburb of Toronto, at one point).
4. The nearest large mountain to Toronto is Blue Mountain. There is a trek to the summit which takes about 2.5 hours on foot.

I now see a better banshee connection with the winged creatures one chapter title calls "Death's Visitors." Each time they go to speak to Cassie it is right after a violent death (Norma Peiper, Florence McNair, and Bill Reis). They call Cassie "our cub" (p. 235), so she is a banshee by adoption, at least.

* The winged "Death's Visitors" (pp. 182, 234-236, 284) are probably harpies

<<http://www.angelfire.com/realm/shades/demons/harpies.htm>>, winged Greek death-spirits also associated with storms. Banshees are also a form of harpies.

Dave Tallman — 19 Dec 2008, 05:11 · follows James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

He had no idea that Cassie's star-power had penetrated his ability to cloud men's minds. If he thought she had checked, then he might choose to change his story.

Errr...if this is so, why didn't her star power allow her to penetrate it later in the restaurant when she watched him disappear?

I like I suggestion I saw on the lists here recently that her power is extra-strong when she is performing on stage. It makes both the play and the audience more real to her, as seen in this quote: "...the play had become far more serious and real, a real life -- hers -- watched not at all strangely by several hundred people sitting in the dark" (p. 52).

It was during the performance that she stole a glance at the audience and saw Bill. When she had exited, she looked out the peephole and could no longer see him (p. 53).

Roy C. Lackey — 19 Dec 2008, 07:01 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman quoted and wrote:

Gid (or someone) had already told her that Reis "walks unseen" in the note written on the back of one of the pictures he left her the night before the play. (44) With that in mind, go back and read carefully the bit at the top of page 21, as he was leaving the White House. On a sunny day. If I were a rabid clone theorist, I would also start wondering about John's glasses

(15)

and Gid's cryptic little dig at him about optics. (19) And why Reis wears glasses only in some photos. He was wearing glasses when she saw him in the audience.

Perhaps Gid can also "walk unseen" when he wants to, and was worried about shadows.

He said he couldn't do it, but might be able to learn if he tried for a year or two. (196) My point is, yes, he thought he might be followed from the White House in the conventional gumshoe sense, but he amended his thought to wonder if he was also "being followed already." (21) So he tried to tire and lose "his unseen companion--or companions--if he could." I find the choice of the word "unseen" to be just too coincidental, given what he soon wrote on the back of that photo. I think he was looking for shadows that shouldn't have been there.

A few points about "optics":

1) Gid may be referring to the ability to walk unseen, since it is a skill used and taught on Woldercan.

Humans can and have walked unseen long before they discovered Woldercan. (198)

2) Since we have laser surgery even today, one would think ordinary glasses to correct vision would be obsolete.

3) The assassin says she wears glasses that let her see in the dark (p. 249). John's glasses may be of this type.

It was daytime. In the White House.

4) John's glasses are thick (giving the impression of blindness, p. 15)

and

making eye contact difficult. That might be a precaution against hypnotism.

5) The glasses are only seen in the full-length shot (p. 44), perhaps taken

without Reis knowing. The close-ups may be posed. Reis may wear glasses in public as a disguise.

Sunglasses are a given. (44) But in a darkened theater at night, why would a man who is invisible wear glasses to disguise himself? Why show up invisible at all? He was invited. And the Jimmy incident happened after the play was over.

Speaking of invisibility, here is a really strange instance. Vince Palma brushes an "invisible yellow feather" from his lips at the party (p. 64).

He

will wear a headdress of red and yellow feathers as the Volcano God (p. 285). Is he wearing this at the "Red Spot" party, and rendering it invisible by mental powers? He seems to be one powerful guy:

I took the yellow feather bit as just a continuation of the cat analogy. As in the common expression "the cat that ate the canary". He is pompous, smug, just full of himself.

1) He knows about Gray Neighbors and banshees (p. 64).

2) He plays with Cassie like a cat with a mouse (p. 63).

3) He knows Cassie's real name (p. 63), which she is startled to find out that Reis knows later (p. 146).

3) His voice makes everything he says sound important (p. 285).

His role in "The Red Spot" is minor (a poor scheming detective p. 63), but Rosenquist picks him out for the Volcano God at once. Who is Vince Palma really? Is he possessed by the Volcano God, perhaps under the control of Bill Reis? The real Volcano God looks like him when he appears to Cassie, so there seems to be something there...

Yeah, but I'm not sure what. Maybe this is a clue: Vince claims to be 6'4"; Reis is 6'2". I can't recall if Gil is said to be slightly taller than Gid, but Klauser thought the "Casey girl" was about a half inch taller than the aged Cassie. (295) That's an odd thing for a man who saw the glamourized Cassie only on vid to say. But there might be a pattern there.

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 19 Dec 2008, 12:34 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Sunglasses are a given. (44) But in a darkened theater at night, why would a man who is invisible wear glasses to disguise himself? Why show up invisible at all?

Reis had a lot of enemies, including the F.B.I., the A.T.F., and Cthulhu cultists. He would be sensible to take any number of precautions when going to a public place where someone might expect him to be (if India talked, for example). He attended all his son's football games invisibly (p. 277).

Why disguise himself when he's already invisible? It seems cameras can defeat glammers (the photo of Gib showed him as he really was) and maybe invisibility too, since it works on the same principle. That gives another possible explanation for John's thick glasses. They could conceal a camera and video feed, so he could have "true sight." Chase might have been telling John that the Woldercans could do the same thing without being so obvious, with their superior science of optics.

I took the yellow feather bit as just a continuation of the cat analogy. As in the common expression "the cat that ate the canary". He is pompous, smug, just full of himself.

That's a plausible alternative. Still, Wolfe goes out of his way to mention the yellow feathers in the headdress later, so I tend to think this is a clue.

Yeah, but I'm not sure what. Maybe this is a clue: Vince claims to be 6'4"; Reis is 6'2". I can't recall if Gil is said to be slightly taller than Gid, but Klauser thought the "Casey girl" was about a half inch taller than the aged Cassie. (295) That's an odd thing for a man who saw the glamourized Cassie only on vid to say. But there might be a pattern there.

So maybe Vince is a clone or temporal double of Reis, using a glamour to appear different? That could be it. And if so that makes Norma Peiper the real ex-wife of Reis or his equivalent, just as I suspected. "I used to be married to the volcano god." (p. 176)

David Stockhoff — 19 Dec 2008, 18:13 · follows Dave Tallman

May I say that this is the strangest post I have yet seen on this listserv. And the AEG discussions are usually pretty damn weird, if you haven't read the thing.

I'm impressed and a little apprehensive, but I'm waiting for the paperback ...

Message: 1

Date: Thu, 18 Dec 2008 21:51:26 -0700

From: Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) AEG clones...send them in

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Message-ID: <494B284E.6080300 at gmail.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

Henry Eissler wrote:

You were the one that pointed out that Gideon may have infused her with the spirit of the banshee - the Washer at the Ford. I think the Cassie part of Cassie came close to dying on the Volcano God's island, but that last line at the end shows that she's not gone- she's the one that liked to call him "Wally."

As to why Dr. Chase would have wanted to put the spirit of a mountain god's wife into her... who knows.

I don't think Cassie was infused with a different spirit. Chase speaks of energizing her innate star potential (p. 41). I pretty much gave up on the "Washer at the Ford" theory after I found another reference that fit better. Here it is, as I wrote it up for WolfeWiki:

* "A mountain whose wife washed clothes?" (pp. 41-42, 83) is a reference to Someone Comes to Town, Someone Leaves Town <http://craphound.com/someone/Cory_Doctorow_-_Someone_Comes_to_Town_Someone_Leaves_Town.htm>

by Cory Doctorow. The protagonist Alan's father was a mountain and his mother was a washing machine. Credit for discovering this belongs to Marc Aramini. It's a perfect match:

1. The mountain quakes when it's angry.
2. There are gnomes and golems in its caves.
3. The setting is near Toronto, Canada. (The protagonist goes to Willowdale, a suburb of Toronto, at one point).
4. The nearest large mountain to Toronto is Blue Mountain. There is a trek to the summit which takes about 2.5 hours on foot.

Roy C. Lackey — 19 Dec 2008, 20:55 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman quoted and wrote:

Yeah, but I'm not sure what. Maybe this is a clue: Vince claims to be 6'4";

Reis is 6'2". I can't recall if Gil is said to be slightly taller than Gid,

but Klauser thought the "Casey girl" was about a half inch taller than the

aged Cassie. (295) That's an odd thing for a man who saw the glamorized Cassie only on vid to say. But there might be a pattern there.

So maybe Vince is a clone or temporal double of Reis, using a glamour to appear different? That could be it. And if so that makes Norma Peiper the real ex-wife of Reis or his equivalent, just as I suspected. "I used to be married to the volcano god." (p. 176)

I was thinking that people who have been artificially enhanced in some way, like Cassie, are made to appear literally larger than life, so to speak. The height comparisons pop up too often

to be anything but deliberate. There is another that I forgot, the chauffeur Carlos. "He looked taller and darker than the uniformed man she remembered seeing when she had looked down at the white limousine." (116)

I'm still not convinced about Norma. For one thing, the rich woman Sharon talked about was said to be devoted to her son. I have a hard time believing that a rich woman devoted to her child would spend time slumming as an actress in a second-rate theater production like *The Red Spot*. A rich ex-wife could have bought her own show on Broadway and starred in it if she had the acting bug. Just before Norma was killed, she seemed to be concerned that she might be replaced in the proposed expanded production of Reis' play, and wanted Cassie to use her clout to save her job. If she were rich, all she had to do was slip greedy India enough money and her job would be secure. Plus, I have doubts about any woman, particularly a rich woman, wanting to play second-fiddle to another woman in a play produced by her ex, especially when the ex is obviously infatuated with the star. Ain't natural.

-Roy

John Watkins — 19 Dec 2008, 21:05 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 12/19/08, Roy C. Lackey <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

I'm still not convinced about Norma. For one thing, the rich woman Sharon talked about was said to be devoted to her son. I have a hard time believing that a rich woman devoted to her child would spend time slumming as an actress in a second-rate theater production like *The Red Spot*. A rich ex-wife could have bought her own show on Broadway and starred in it if she had the acting bug. Just before Norma was killed, she seemed to be concerned that she might be replaced in the proposed expanded production of Reis' play, and wanted Cassie to use her clout to save her job. If she were rich, all she had to do was slip greedy India enough money and her job would be secure. Plus, I have doubts about any woman, particularly a rich woman, wanting to play second-fiddle to another woman in a play produced by her ex, especially when the ex is obviously infatuated with the star. Ain't natural.

-Roy

This is a pretty convincing argument, IMHO. I think maybe we're looking at a parallel rather than an identity. Reis has used the Vincent/Norma relationship to mirror his relationship with his ex-wife.

But why? I think this comes back to the bigger question--what's the purpose of Dating the Volcano God?

Adam Thornton — 19 Dec 2008, 21:12 · in reply to John Watkins

On Dec 19, 2008, at 3:05 PM, John Watkins wrote:

But why? I think this comes back to the bigger question--what's the purpose of Dating the Volcano God?

I'm NOT GOING TO MAKE A JOKE ABOUT

"Getting his rocks off."

OH CRAP.

Adam

Roy C. Lackey — 19 Dec 2008, 23:33 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Stupid me. Wolfe hid the answer in plain sight.

I wrote:

Also at Rusterman's, Reis said:

"You were wearing green the first time I saw you."

"In the play? I wasn't. That was brown."

"So it was. I was thinking of the party. I took you home, remember?"

Cassie nodded. "Thank you. You saw _The Red Spot_, though. The final performance."

"I didn't. I know I said I did, but that was . . ."

"Diplomacy?"

"Yes, exactly. India had given me tickets, and I didn't want to admit I hadn't used them."(119)

Diplomacy? Cassie had seen him in the audience (53), and at the cast party he said he had been there. (66) So was he lying then or now? Sure, his first sight of her could have been on vid; he demonstrated the capability to her three months later in his car. But Gid had put the glamour on her less than twenty-four hours before that final performance. So who did she see in the audience?

In fairness to myself, my OED failed me. But when I complained to my wife about it after school today, she knew right off the definition I was looking for, and Google confirmed it.

Reis did lie to Cassie, but his lie was in the attempt to cover up the truth about what she was wearing the first time he saw her. I knew there had to be a text-based solution, so I went looking for every mention of Cassie's clothes before the play. I found the green dress; I just didn't know the meaning of the word. "The warmer dress she had put on for the short walk to Baskin-Robbins hung neatly beside it. Its loden wool held a sweet and smoky aroma, with a bitter undercurrent." (43) Loden is a shade of green, as any woman could tell you. That is the dress Cassie was wearing when Reis first saw her.

She had that dress on only from the time she dressed for the ice cream store, shortly before midnight, until Gideon (or someone) undressed her after taking her home. Sometime that night, presumably after Gid cast the glamour on her, Reis saw her and wanted her. That's why he went to India at noon before the play to become her "angel" in a big, new musical.

But this brings up two more questions: Exactly when and where did Reis see her that night? And was Gid complicit in the viewing? What kind of gentleman hypnotizes a woman he just met, plants suggestions and leaves a void in her memory, then takes her home and takes her clothes off? OTOH, Gid did arrange for video publicity from Sharon during the day, before the play that evening.

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 19 Dec 2008, 23:40 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

I'm still not convinced about Norma. For one thing, the rich woman Sharon talked about was said to be devoted to her son. I have a hard time believing

that a rich woman devoted to her child would spend time slumming as an actress in a second-rate theater production like *The Red Spot*. A rich ex-wife could have bought her own show on Broadway and starred in it if she had the acting bug. Just before Norma was killed, she seemed to be concerned that she might be replaced in the proposed expanded production of Reis' play, and wanted Cassie to use her clout to save her job. If she were rich, all she had to do was slip greedy India enough money and her job would be secure. Plus, I have doubts about any woman, particularly a rich woman, wanting to play second-fiddle to another woman in a play produced by her ex, especially when the ex is obviously infatuated with the star. Ain't natural.

Those other options would have reduced Norma's privacy. The rich woman seems to have sworn Sharon to secrecy about her identity. There could be good reasons for this, like the fear of Bill's enemies. If Norma was that woman, we can see that her fears were justified.

There may also be wheels within wheels as far as her motivations for getting close to Cassie.

- 1) Reis may have put her up to it initially, as part of a trap.
- 2) The ATF may have forced her into it by threats, since they use ex-spouses.
- 3) She may not like Cassie as much as she appears. Knowing Cassie's constant concern about her weight, she tempted her with a plate of fattening food (p. 60).
- 4) She can't stop smiling when Cassie is onstage with her. Is this a normal reaction to Cassie's star-attraction. or a cover?
- 5) She does enough calling to Cassie that her name pops into Cassie's head when she needs a quick alibi for a phone call from Chase.
- 6) The sniper seemed to know the path the women would take, and Norma suggested the departure together and led the way.
- 7) She was wearing a black wool coat that night, suggesting she is a "black sheep."

Dave Tallman — 19 Dec 2008, 23:51 · follows Dave Tallman

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

But this brings up two more questions: Exactly when and where did Reis see her that night? And was Gid complicit in the viewing? What kind of gentleman hypnotizes a woman he just met, plants suggestions and leaves a void in her memory, then takes her home and takes her clothes off? OTOH, Gid did arrange for video publicity from Sharon during the day, before the play that evening.

Good catch on the loden wool. I was just looking it up because I wanted to find other mentions of wool garments (besides Norma's black wool coat), but I missed the color clue in the references I found.

Here's on possibility on the viewing: the cop who picks up Cassie (Aaberg) turns out to be a double agent for Reis. He had a computer monitor in his car. In BotLS, computer monitors that seem to be off can be used to spy on people. Reis could have gotten a look at her through the monitor.

John Watkins — 20 Dec 2008, 01:33 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Not only is loden a shade of green, but, as my wife just informed me, it's mossy green. This seems to me to connect Cassie to Disiri, the Queen of the Moss Aelf. Both get "elevated" above their natural metaphysical status.

On 12/19/08, Roy C. Lackey <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:
Stupid me. Wolfe hid the answer in plain sight.

I wrote:

Also at Rusterman's, Reis said:

"You were wearing green the first time I saw you."

"In the play? I wasn't. That was brown."

"So it was. I was thinking of the party. I took you home, remember?"

Cassie nodded. "Thank you. You saw _The Red Spot_, though. The final performance."

"I didn't. I know I said I did, but that was . . ."

"Diplomacy?"

"Yes, exactly. India had given me tickets, and I didn't want to admit I hadn't used them."(119)

Diplomacy? Cassie had seen him in the audience (53), and at the cast party he said he had been there. (66) So was he lying then or now? Sure, his first sight of her could have been on vid; he demonstrated the capability to her three months later in his car. But Gid had put the glamour on her less than twenty-four hours before that final performance. So who did she see in the audience?

In fairness to myself, my OED failed me. But when I complained to my wife about it after school today, she knew right off the definition I was looking for, and Google confirmed it.

Reis did lie to Cassie, but his lie was in the attempt to cover up the truth about what she was wearing the first time he saw her. I knew there had to be a text-based solution, so I went looking for every mention of Cassie's clothes before the play. I found the green dress; I just didn't know the meaning of the word. "The warmer dress she had put on for the short walk to Baskin-Robbins hung neatly beside it. Its loden wool held a sweet and smoky aroma, with a bitter undercurrent." (43) Loden is a shade of green, as any woman could tell you. That is the dress Cassie was wearing when Reis first saw her.

She had that dress on only from the time she dressed for the ice cream store, shortly before midnight, until Gideon (or someone) undressed her after taking her home. Sometime that night, presumably after Gid cast the glamour on her, Reis saw her and wanted her. That's why he went to India at noon before the play to become her "angel" in a big, new musical.

But this brings up two more questions: Exactly when and where did Reis see her that night? And was Gid complicit in the viewing? What kind of gentleman hypnotizes a woman he just met, plants suggestions and leaves a void in her memory, then takes her home and takes her clothes off? OTOH, Gid did arrange for video publicity from Sharon during the day, before the play that evening.

-Roy

Dave Tallman wrote:

Those other options would have reduced Norma's privacy. The rich woman seems to have sworn Sharon to secrecy about her identity. There could be good reasons for this, like the fear of Bill's enemies. If Norma was that woman, we can see that her fears were justified.

There are two simple means to satisfy privacy concerns:

- 1) Don't talk to gossip reporters.
- 2) Stay out of the limelight.

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 20 Dec 2008, 06:04 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman wrote:

Here's one possibility on the viewing: the cop who picks up Cassie (Aaberg) turns out to be a double agent for Reis. He had a computer monitor in his car. In BotLS, computer monitors that seem to be off can be used to spy on people. Reis could have gotten a look at her through the monitor.

The glamour was put on Cassie in Canada. Aaberg wasn't in a position to see the new Cassie.

Before the glamour, Cassie was just a thirtyish, second-rate actress and no particular beauty. The girl at Baskin-Robbins had no regard for her at all, unlike the waitresses and everyone else who saw her after that night. Without Gid's glamour, Reis wouldn't have looked twice at her--which is exactly why Gid put it on her.

The photo Gid listened to at the White House was obviously made shortly after Reis was replaced as ambassador, 2-3 years earlier. He already had plans for his South Seas kingdom when he left Woldercan. He was probably looking for the right woman to satisfy his lust and ego as his high queen. Gid already knew about Cassie from seeing her in other plays over the years. (207) The most desirable woman in the world was the perfect bait, and Reis took it.

Btw, Aaberg was made to look like Scott, which means that Gid knew all about Cassie's past when he left her that first note. And it suggests that Gid put a slight glamour on Aaberg to make him look that way. And when Cassie first saw Aaberg:

"The man who entered was both tall and wide, nearing middle age. Cassie gasped, 'Scott . . . ?' 'Who's that?' His voice was deep and a trifle raspy."

That sounds a lot like the descriptions and voice of Reis. Just so we don't forget about clones.
<g>

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 20 Dec 2008, 14:05 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Before the glamour, Cassie was just a thirtyish, second-rate actress and no particular beauty. The girl at Baskin-Robbins had no regard for her at all, unlike the waitresses and everyone else who saw her after that night. Without Gid's glamour, Reis wouldn't have looked twice at her--which is exactly why Gid put it on her.

If Reis had come to see Cassie full of love from the beginning I would have to agree with you that he only saw her in glamorized form. He didn't: he came with murderous intent because he wanted to prove his power to Chase.

Cassie's change was of personal magnetism and presence. Her face wasn't changed; her friends still recognized her. Chase admitted to himself that he loved her before the change and would continue to if she lost it (p. 81). Chase also there was a chance Reis would kill Cassie just for talking to him. He thought the odds were equal whether she transformed or not (pp. 31-32).

I think it's far more likely that Reis saw Cassie in the loden wool dress that night by means of Aaberg (whether by his computer monitor or some other hidden camera) than that Chase forwarded videos to him of Cassie after she was transformed. Chase and Reis were not on good terms at that point.

Btw, Aaberg was made to look like Scott, which means that Gid knew all about Cassie's past when he left her that first note. And it suggests that Gid put a slight glamour on Aaberg to make him look that way.

I agree that Aaberg was probably enchanted by Chase that night. Not only did he look like Scott to Cassie but he seems to have had a power of hypnosis -- his suggestion about lipstick putting her to sleep really did. The height, weight, and voice clues are interesting, but I don't believe that Aaberg is a clone of Reis. It may just show she had loved and married Reis' physical type before.

Dave Tallman — 20 Dec 2008, 14:15 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

There are two simple means to satisfy privacy concerns:

- 1) Don't talk to gossip reporters.
- 2) Stay out of the limelight.

My theory is that Sharon ferreted out the information that Norma was the ex-wife of a famous rich former ambassador and approached Norma for an interview. Norma managed to get her to be quiet about it. Norma did about as well as she could to avoid the limelight, if she wanted to act at all.

James Wynn — 21 Dec 2008, 03:53 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Stupid me. Wolfe hid the answer in plain sight.

Reis did lie to Cassie, but his lie was in the attempt to cover up the truth

about what she was wearing the first time he saw her. I knew there had to be

a text-based solution...Sometime that night, presumably after Gid cast the glamour on her, Reis saw her and wanted her. That's why he went to India at noon before the play to become her "angel" in a big, new musical.

It's true that Cassie wears green prior to the party, but this solution is no more "text-based" than your prior theory. It is significantly less so, really, since it relies on reams of supposition about what might have or have not happened between the time Cassie reached the mountain and when she got home. Rather than solving anything, it inelegantly raises an intimidating army of intractable mysteries.

On the other hand, your prior theory succeeds in resolving the issue of why Reis was lying up a storm about seeing her at the play. Why **after the fact** would Reis need to lie about seeing her at the play? Because no one else saw him there? So what? So they didn't see him. He just says, "You must have missed seeing me."

J.

Roy C. Lackey — 21 Dec 2008, 06:15 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn quoted from two different paragraphs I wrote and tied them together with [...] (minus the brackets), which distorts the meaning:

Stupid me. Wolfe hid the answer in plain sight.
Reis did lie to Cassie, but his lie was in the attempt to cover up the truth
about what she was wearing the first time he saw her. I knew there had to be
a text-based solution...Sometime that night, presumably after Gid cast the
glamour on her, Reis saw her and wanted her. That's why he went to India at
noon before the play to become her "angel" in a big, new musical.

What I actually wrote was:
[begin quote]

Reis did lie to Cassie, but his lie was in the attempt to cover up the truth
about what she was wearing the first time he saw her. I knew there had to be
a text-based solution, so I went looking for every mention of Cassie's clothes before the play. I found the green dress; I just didn't know the meaning of the word. "The warmer dress she had put on for the short walk to
Baskin-Robbins hung neatly beside it. Its loden wool held a sweet and smoky
aroma, with a bitter undercurrent." (43) Loden is a shade of green, as any woman could tell you. That is the dress Cassie was wearing when Reis first saw her.

She had that dress on only from the time she dressed for the ice cream store, shortly before midnight, until Gideon (or someone) undressed her after taking her home. Sometime that night, presumably after Gid cast the glamour on her, Reis saw her and wanted her. That's why he went to India at
noon before the play to become her "angel" in a big, new musical.

[end quote]

It's true that Cassie wears green prior to the party, but this solution is no more "text-based" than your prior theory.

The text-based solution I meant, as the remainder of my original paragraph makes clear, is the solution to the question of what green dress Cassie wore before the play that Reis could have seen her wearing.

It is significantly less so, really, since it relies on reams of supposition about what might have or have not happened between the time Cassie reached the mountain and when she got home. Rather than solving anything, it inelegantly raises an intimidating army of intractable mysteries.

Inelegantly? Oh, dear. As for the mysteries, they come with the territory.

On the other hand, your prior theory succeeds in resolving the issue of why Reis was lying up a storm about seeing her at the play.

Only if there really are clones of Reis in the story. No smoking gun has yet been found. The loden dress doesn't kill the clone theory.

Why *after the fact*
would Reis need to lie about seeing her at the play?

I still have not seen a good answer for that, or I would have abandoned the clone theory.

-Roy

James Wynn — 21 Dec 2008, 09:17 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy took umbrage:

James Wynn quoted from two different paragraphs I wrote and tied them together with [...] (minus the brackets), which distorts the meaning:

First off: This is unmitigated crap. I tied together the points I was directly responding to with an ellipsis . Since when are the additional brackets required? Anyone following the thread will have read the original post for its full beauty. It's fine for you to clarify, but the segments I provided do not distort the meaning of anything you said. I certainly didn't do anything to *dishonestly* distort their meaning as your reply implied (intentionally or not). Is there a point in the original that deserves reiteration? Is there a nuance that didn't carry the first time? Okay. That happens to me too.

The text-based solution I meant, as the remainder of my original paragraph makes clear, is the solution to the question of what green dress Cassie wore before the play that Reis could have seen her wearing.

Didn't carry. And it's not text based either, which is probably why it didn't. Reis never said AFAIK that he saw Cassie in the dress *before* the play. He said he saw Cassie wearing the dress at the party. Quote: "I was thinking of the party. I took you home, remember?" Maybe he lied. But then the whole conversation is a lie without any mixture of truth. So, maybe he's lying about her being in a green dress the first time he saw her as well? Maybe he's lying about loving her? Maybe Gid had him take her home from the mountain. But why all the lies? He knows that Cassie is working for Gid. Either way, he knows she knows he knows she is working for Gid.

On the other hand, we have Wolfe's M.O. of having people tell apparent lies that end up being the truth. This theory doesn't fit that, but your previous one did.

Inelegantly? Oh, dear. As for the mysteries, they come with the territory.

Roy, you discarded (perhaps only temporarily) an explanation **for this scene** that tied up a bunch of loose ends in a single sweep and devised one instead that generates out of thin air an entire novel's worth of mysteries. "Comes with the territory"? You're leveraging the Louisiana Purchase with pocket change. It doesn't mean it's not true, but it certainly isn't based on a more *literal* reading.

Only if there really are clones of Reis in the story. No smoking gun has yet
been found. The loden dress doesn't kill the clone theory.

But it *is* an alternate theory. And as for being useful as a theory, it creates an irresolvable mess that would turn further consideration of "what is really going on" into pure augury.

The answer isn't going to come as a smoking gun. It's going to come from the preponderance of the evidence. It will come from an explanation (or a short list of explanations) that makes the story fit together.

J.

Dave Tallman — 21 Dec 2008, 12:27 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

It's true that Cassie wears green prior to the party, but this solution is no more "text-based" than your prior theory. It is significantly less so, really, since it relies on reams of supposition about what might have or have not happened between the time Cassie reached the mountain and when she got home. Rather than solving anything, it inelegantly raises an intimidating army of intractable mysteries.

That may be true of Roy's original theory, but not of my revised version (that Reis saw her before the glamour, using Aaberg as his spy). Chase simply took her home -- no extra suppositions are needed.

On the other hand, your prior theory succeeds in resolving the issue of why Reis was lying up a storm about seeing her at the play. Why *after the fact* would Reis need to lie about seeing her at the play? Because no one else saw him there? So what? So they didn't see him. He just says, "You must have missed seeing me."

Statements by Reis:

- 1) "...I saw 'The Red Spot' tonight..." (p. 67).
- 2) "You were wearing green the first time I saw you." (p. 119)
- 3) "I was thinking of the party." (p. 119)
- 4) "I didn't [see the play]. I know I said I did, but that was..." (p. 119)

The hard one to explain is #4. He chose to contradict himself, when he could have kept consistent by sticking to the idea that he was just thinking about the party, that her brown dress in the play didn't count because she in a role, etc.

Clone theory: 1) F, 2) T, 3) T, 4) T. More trues than falses this way, but why not keep it simple and take the actions of his clone for his own?

Loden dress theory: 1) T, 2) T, 3) F, 4) F. In this one, he had been caught in an admission he didn't want to make (#2). He covered for it clumsily, perhaps because he was flustered.

The Rusterman conversation is full of lies and half-truths on both sides. Part of the fun is figuring them out. His explanation of the reason he took the bracelet back from Margaret is at least full of lies by omission. "I had hoped that you would love it..." (and get radiation poisoning).

John Smith — 21 Dec 2008, 13:30 · in reply to Dave Tallman

--- On Sun, 12/21/08, Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com> wrote:

From: Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) AEG clones

His

explanation of the

reason he took the bracelet back from Margaret is at least full of lies

by omission. "I had hoped that you would love

it..." (and get radiation

poisoning).

Common gold Au 197 is stable, but all other gold isotopes are highly radioactive. Isn't a gold isotope a clone (an evil clone) of the true metal?

Best wishes,
Jack

James Wynn — 21 Dec 2008, 18:26 · in reply to Dave Tallman

- 1) "...I saw 'The Red Spot' tonight..." (p. 67).
- 2) "You were wearing green the first time I saw you." (p. 119)
- 3) "I was thinking of the party." (p. 119)
- 4) "I didn't [see the play]. I know I said I did, but that was..." (p. 119)

[...]

Clone theory: 1) F, 2) T, 3) T, 4) T. More trues than falses this way, but why not keep it simple and take the actions of his clone for his own?

Loden dress theory: 1) T, 2) T, 3) F, 4) F. In this one, he had been caught in an admission he didn't want to make (#2). He covered for it clumsily, perhaps because he was flustered.

The Clone Theory is T for #1 if one presumes his clone saw it instead. I don't actually think it counts for much anyway since it doesn't occur in the Rusterman conversation, and a lie that a character admits is a lie later is of a different type. An the Clone Theory doesn't generate previously unimagined conundrums.

J.

Roy C. Lackey — 21 Dec 2008, 21:19 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn quoted and wrote:

The text-based solution I meant, as the remainder of my original paragraph makes clear, is the solution to the question of what green dress Cassie wore before the play that Reis could have seen her wearing.

Didn't carry. And it's not text based either, which is probably why it didn't.

Buckshot. The loden dress is in the text, like it or not. In the Rusterman conversation, Wolfe went out of his way to give the reader pause to wonder why and how there could be any confusion over the seemingly minor issue of when Reis first saw Cassie. Do you really think that Wolfe gave an inventory of Cassie's closet that included an obscured mention of a green dress, clearly identifiable as the dress she wore on the mountain, for no good reason?

Reis never said AFAIK that he saw Cassie in the dress *before* the play.

Of course not.

He said he saw Cassie wearing the dress at the party. Quote: "I was thinking of the party. I took you home, remember?"

He saw her wearing *a* dress at the party, and it may well have been a green one--redheads are known for wearing green. But no woman is going to wear the same dress she wore the night before to a party, particularly when that dress was worn while hiking up a mountain and it reeks

of incense and wood smoke. Cassie didn't like the smell of Gid's ritual concoction, and even said she wouldn't want to wear that smell. (42)

Maybe he lied. But then
the whole conversation is a lie without any mixture of truth. So, maybe
he's
lying about her being in a green dress the first time he saw her as well?
Maybe he's lying about loving her?

And we get to pick what is a lie and what is true according to how well it fits a particular theory?

Maybe Gid had him take her home from the
mountain.

Doubtful, otherwise the pictures with the notes on them would not have been in her purse when she woke up.

Inelegantly? Oh, dear. As for the mysteries, they come with the
territory.

Roy, you discarded (perhaps only temporarily) an explanation **for this
scene** that tied up a bunch of loose ends in a single sweep and devised
one
instead that generates out of thin air

Not out of thin air.

an entire novel's worth of mysteries.
"Comes with the territory"? You're leveraging the Louisiana Purchase with
pocket change. It doesn't mean it's not true, but it certainly isn't based
on
a more *literal* reading.

Huh. I can't help it if the loden dress doesn't help the clone theory. But it's there.

Only if there really are clones of Reis in the story. No smoking gun has
yet
been found. The loden dress doesn't kill the clone theory.

But it *is* an alternate theory.

It isn't a global theory. The loden dress just serves to explain how Reis could have been telling the truth about when he first saw Cassie.

[snip]

The answer isn't going to come as a smoking gun.

With that I will agree.

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 21 Dec 2008, 22:29 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman wrote:

Statements by Reis:

- 1) "...I saw 'The Red Spot' tonight..." (p. 67).
- 2) "You were wearing green the first time I saw you." (p. 119)
- 3) "I was thinking of the party." (p. 119)
- 4) "I didn't [see the play]. I know I said I did, but that was..." (p.

119)

The hard one to explain is #4. He chose to contradict himself, when he could have kept consistent by sticking to the idea that he was just

thinking about the party, that her brown dress in the play didn't count because she in a role, etc.

Clone theory: 1) F, 2) T, 3) T, 4) T. More trues than falses this way, but why not keep it simple and take the actions of his clone for his own?

Loden dress theory: 1) T, 2) T, 3) F, 4) F. In this one, he had been caught in an admission he didn't want to make (#2). He covered for it clumsily, perhaps because he was flustered.

The only point you have marked true for both these scenarios is that Cassie was wearing a green dress when Reis first saw her.

The Rusterman conversation is full of lies and half-truths on both sides. Part of the fun is figuring them out. His explanation of the reason he took the bracelet back from Margaret is at least full of lies by omission. "I had hoped that you would love it..." (and get radiation poisoning).

One of the problems with this clone theory is that there should be some sort of coordination among clones in order to avoid tripping each other up and exposing themselves. That in turn necessitates one individual as the prime individual who benefits from the coordinated actions of the others. Otherwise, each individual will have his own agenda, which will lead to conflicts. Reis was a megalomaniac. As such, he could never tolerate rivals of equal knowledge, powers and resources. Part of his stated ego trip was that he and he alone would possess the most desirable woman in the world. If only one guy gets the girl . . . things are bound to get ugly.

-Roy

James Wynn — 22 Dec 2008, 00:41 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

One of the problems with this clone theory is that there should be some sort of coordination among clones in order to avoid tripping each other up and exposing themselves. That in turn necessitates one individual as the prime individual who benefits from the coordinated actions of the others.

I thought that was the whole point of the clone theory. The clone theory allows murderer Reis to give Cassie a deadly bracelet, and island king Rosenquist to fall in love with Cassie and take it back and give her a diamond one instead. They would need each other, but they have their own desires out of life. Reis would want to rule "his island in a sea of black" liberated from the Squid God, but Rosenquist would want to rule his island in a sea of blue liberated from the Squid God. You pointed out how suspicious it is that we never meet Rian. But maybe we did. Maybe he doesn't look like he's 16 years old. Maybe he looks just like the guy who is bank-rolling Cassie's play.

Otherwise, each individual will have his own agenda, which will lead to conflicts. Reis was a megalomaniac. As such, he could never tolerate rivals of equal knowledge, powers and resources.

Not necessarily so. He might see it as necessary to accomplish his purposes. His obsessive self-cloning could be the primary presentation of his meglomania, and "a touch of meglomania" might be the signiture emotion of the clones.

Part of his stated ego trip was that he and he alone would possess the most desirable woman in the world.

It depends on which clone we are talking about. The benefit of a clone story is that one can use it to examine the nature of the soul and identity (as in the movie "Dark City") which seems to be Wolfe's favorite theme: Take a man and slightly alter his memory and/or personal history. Will he turn out the same?

If only one guy gets the girl . . . things are bound to get ugly.

Or if one wants the girl win the most desirable woman and another sees her as a terrible threat. IF the clone theory is correct, then Cassie seems to suspect on a subconscious level that one of them doesn't want to win her-- he wants to kill her. (pg 181)

J.

Adam Thornton — 22 Dec 2008, 02:46 · in reply to James Wynn

On Dec 21, 2008, at 6:41 PM, James Wynn wrote:

It depends on which clone we are talking about. The benefit of a clone story is that one can use it to examine the nature of the soul and identity (as in the movie "Dark City") which seems to be Wolfe's favorite theme: Take a man and slightly alter his memory and/or personal history. Will he turn out the same?

What can change the nature of a man?

Oops. I got my Planescape: Torment in your Gene Wolfe.

Adam

Roy C. Lackey — 22 Dec 2008, 06:36 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn quoted and wrote:

One of the problems with this clone theory is that there should be some sort of coordination among clones in order to avoid tripping each other up and exposing themselves. That in turn necessitates one individual as the prime individual who benefits from the coordinated actions of the others.

I thought that was the whole point of the clone theory. The clone theory allows murderer Reis to give Cassie a deadly bracelet, and island king Rosenquist to fall in love with Cassie and take it back and give her a diamond one instead.

Which one killed a thousand or so people to take control of the islands? Which one benefited?

They would need each other, but they have their own desires out of life. Reis would want to rule "his island in a sea of black" liberated from the Squid God, but Rosenquist would want to rule his island in a sea of blue liberated from the Squid God.

But it is the same guy, the one at Rusterman's, who expressed the desire to have both on the same page. "When I was younger, I wanted to own an island. An island with beaches and palm trees where I would reign as king." [. . .] "I have that island now, but I've seen a better one. A blue isle in a sea of black." (125)

[snip]

Part of his stated ego trip was
that he and he alone would possess the most desirable woman
in the world.

It depends on which clone we are talking about.

The guy at Ruterma's said it. (125) So did the guy who gave her the diamonds, in almost the same words. (145)

[snip]

If only one guy gets the girl . . . things are bound to get ugly.

Or if one wants the girl win the most desirable woman and another sees her
as a terrible threat. IF the clone theory is correct, then Cassie seems to
suspect on a subconscious level that one of them doesn't want to win her--
he
wants to kill her. (pg 181)

At that point she was laboring under the false assumption that she had been the shooter's
intended target. (Wolfe characters are forever jumping to wrong conclusions.) She later learned
from Scott that Norma had been the intended target. (188)

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 22 Dec 2008, 12:16 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

/ Clone theory: 1) F, 2) T, 3) T, 4) T. More trues than falses this way,
/>/ but why not keep it simple and take the actions of his clone for his own?

/>/

/>/ Loden dress theory: 1) T, 2) T, 3) F, 4) F. In this one, he had been
/>/ caught in an admission he didn't want to make (#2). He covered for it
/>/ clumsily, perhaps because he was flustered.

/

The only point you have marked true for both these scenarios is that Cassie
was wearing a green dress when Reis first saw her.

Let's try the other, then.

Mistaken Reis: 1) T, 2) F, 3) T, 4) F. He simply forgot about the brown dress, or omitted it
because it didn't fit his "green goddess" compliment. This leaves lie #4 without any good
reason, when he could have admitted his mistake instead.

One of the problems with this clone theory is that there should be some sort
of coordination among clones in order to avoid tripping each other up and
exposing themselves. That in turn necessitates one individual as the prime
individual who benefits from the coordinated actions of the others.

Otherwise, each individual will have his own agenda, which will lead to
conflicts. Reis was a megalomaniac. As such, he could never tolerate rivals
of equal knowledge, powers and resources. Part of his stated ego trip was
that he and he alone would possess the most desirable woman in the world. If
only one guy gets the girl . . . things are bound to get ugly.

That's not a problem with time-traveling copies. Since it's the same person there's no conflict of
interest, and the memories of the older one can keep the coordination on track.

Another hint in favor of the duplicate theory is Sharon's question on p.

237. "Is Rosenquist tied in with him [William S. Reis]?" It seems pretty clueless to be asking this
so late in the game, unless there is something more Sharon knows. Cassie brushes her off.

What if Sharon was going to tell her that she had evidence they were not the same person?

By the way: Rian could be a clone, but he can't have been aged to look like Bill. What prep school would allow a fat, middle-aged-looking man to be a starting quarterback (p. 277)? Bill couldn't be lying about this because he expects Cassie to meet Rian at the wedding (p. 276). It would risk their relationship to tell an outrageous lie that would soon be exposed.

Roy C. Lackey — 22 Dec 2008, 21:23 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman wrote:

Another hint in favor of the duplicate theory is Sharon's question on p. 237. "Is Rosenquist tied in with him [William S. Reis]?" It seems pretty clueless to be asking this so late in the game, unless there is something more Sharon knows. Cassie brushes her off. What if Sharon was going to tell her that she had evidence they were not the same person?

I don't know if this is related, or what theory it helps or hurts, but the morning after Cassie received the gold bracelet she talked to Gid and mentioned that Wally Rosenquist had given it to her. (75) Gid reacted as if surprised to hear that name. I don't know how to take that. Given the ubiquity of computers, data bases and search engines in the story, to say nothing of the FBI files he had access to, I find it hard to believe that Gid could be unfamiliar with that name if it had been an established Reis alias. Yet Zelda talked in veiled terms as if Rosenquist, "under a dozen names", was well established in financial circles. (90) And India had no doubts that "Wally" was filthy rich. (105) So why did Gid react that way?

By the way: Rian could be a clone, but he can't have been aged to look like Bill. What prep school would allow a fat, middle-aged-looking man to be a starting quarterback (p. 277)? Bill couldn't be lying about this because he expects Cassie to meet Rian at the wedding (p. 276). It would risk their relationship to tell an outrageous lie that would soon be exposed.

I agree.

-Roy

James Wynn — 23 Dec 2008, 00:11 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy said, then James, then Roy

One of the problems with this clone theory is that there should be some sort of coordination among clones in order to avoid tripping each other up and exposing themselves. That in turn necessitates one individual as the prime individual who benefits from the coordinated actions of the others.

I thought that was the whole point of the clone theory. The clone theory allows murderer Reis to give Cassie a deadly bracelet, and island king Rosenquist to fall in love with Cassie and take it back and give her a diamond one instead.

Which one killed a thousand or so people to take control of the islands?
Which one benefited?

To take control of them from whom? The Squid God? One man's wild-eyed revolutionary is another's liberator. The lesser king who described the events to Cassie seemed to see W.R. as a liberator.

But it is the same guy, the one at Rusterman's, who expressed the desire to have both on the same page. "When I was younger, I wanted to own an island. An island with beaches and palm trees where I would reign as

king." [...]

"I have that island now, but I've seen a better one. A blue isle in a sea of black." (125)

Well, that is why I said originally that the clone has *a chance* of resolving open questions. If I were going to construct a "THREE Heads of Cerberus" model for AEG, I would start by positing that the guy Cassie is talking to in Rusterman's is Reis. I'd build off that and see if the system eventually falls apart impossibly.

Roy then James then Roy
Part of his stated ego trip was
that he and he alone would possess the most desirable woman
in the world.

It depends on which clone we are talking about.

The guy at Rusterman's said it. (125)
So did the guy who gave her the
diamonds, in almost the same words. (145)

So the guy who gave her the diamonds and the guy she met at Rusterman's do not need to be the same. That fits if Ries is the one who gave her the bracelet (which does not need to be the guy she met in the car afterwards).

Roy then James then Roy
If only one guy gets the girl . . . things are bound to get ugly.

Or if one wants the girl win the most desirable woman and another sees her as a terrible threat. IF the clone theory is correct, then Cassie seems to suspect on a subconscious level that one of them doesn't want to win her--he wants to kill her. (pg 181)

At that point she was laboring under the false assumption that she had been
the shooter's intended target. (Wolfe characters are forever jumping to wrong conclusions.) She later learned from Scott that Norma had been the intended target. (188)

...And the false conclusion almost as often turns out to have been true in an unexpected sense. Scott says that the ATF shot Norma and that she was the target. I'm not certain yet how much to believe about that. Remember that it was the US Navy, not W.R., who attacked the Squid God. And yet, it isn't entirely accurate to say that W.R. was not behind it.

James Wynn — 23 Dec 2008, 00:14 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Roy said.

One of the problems with this clone theory is that there should be some sort of coordination among clones in order to avoid tripping each other up and exposing themselves. That in turn necessitates one individual as the prime individual who benefits from the coordinated actions of the others. Otherwise, each individual will have his own agenda, which will lead to conflicts. Reis was a megalomaniac. As such, he could never tolerate rivals of equal knowledge, powers and resources. Part of his stated ego trip was that he and he alone would possess the most desirable woman in the world. If only one guy gets the girl . . . things are bound to get ugly.

Dave Tallman replied:

That's not a problem with time-traveling copies. Since it's the same person there's no conflict of interest, and the memories of the older one can keep the coordination on track.

That's true, and time-disjunction is addressed in the story. But then it is only addressed in the sense of ethermail, so one has to clear some brambles in order to qualify that theory.

Dave Tallman said:

By the way: Rian could be a clone, but he can't have been aged to look like Bill. What prep school would allow a fat, middle-aged-looking man to be a starting quarterback (p. 277)? Bill couldn't be lying about this because he expects Cassie to meet Rian at the wedding (p. 276). It would risk their relationship to tell an outrageous lie that would soon be exposed.

Good point. I forgot about that last night.

J

Roy C. Lackey — 23 Dec 2008, 06:29 · in reply to James Wynn

James, me, James:

I thought that was the whole point of the clone theory. The clone theory allows murderer Reis to give Cassie a deadly bracelet, and island king Rosenquist to fall in love with Cassie and take it back and give her a diamond one instead.

Which one killed a thousand or so people to take control of the islands? Which one benefited?

To take control of them from whom? The Squid God? One man's wild-eyed revolutionary is another's liberator. The lesser king who described the events to Cassie seemed to see W.R. as a liberator.

Yeah, but only while things were good. When push came to shove, Kanoa turned on him and got him killed. Btw, it was Kanoa who gave another "W.R." name for him, Wiliama 'Aukailani. Between his native and British accents, it's hard to tell if the apostrophe represents only one or more than one missing letter, but the second name will surely start with "R". Anyway, Kanoa calls him "Bill in private. No side, eh? William, the sailor of Heaven." (248) That suggests that the island "liberator" is the same guy who gave Cassie the deadly bracelet, William "Bill" Reis.

-Roy

David Duffy — 23 Dec 2008, 07:44 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Has anyone brought up Arthur-Guinevere-Merlin rather than Lancelot? Reis is the High King after all, and GC is definitely a wizard.

Cheers, David Duffy.

| David Duffy (MBBS PhD) ,_-|\n
| email: davidD at qimr.edu.au ph: INT+61+7+3362-0217 fax: -0101 / *\n
| Epidemiology Unit, Queensland Institute of Medical Research _-_-/_\n
| 300 Herston Rd, Brisbane, Queensland 4029, Australia GPG 4D0B994A v

Dave Tallman — 23 Dec 2008, 12:02 · in reply to David Duffy

David Duffy wrote:

Has anyone brought up Arthur-Guinevere-Merlin rather than Lancelot?
Reis is the High King after all, and GC is definitely a wizard.

Merlin's love interest was usually Viviane (aka Nimue), the Lady of the Lake, not Guinevere. Wolfe followed this line in "The Magic Animal." Viviane and Morgan le Fey are combined in Castlevue, and the Merlin there seemed to be the old King Geimreadh (he lived with Viviane, he appeared old while she appeared young, and he was key to an act of magic in the end).

The Castlevue character I saw as closest to Lancelot was Rex Madadh. He was a fey, a werewolf, but he ended up with the Guinevere of that story (Sally). Lancelot had a fey connection too, since he was taken from his human family as a child and raised by the Lady of the Lake in her magical realm. That's a good fit for Gideon Chase as well.

Chase was young, strong, and handsome. These are more traits of Lancelot than Merlin. Lancelot was known to perform healings, as Chase healed Rian. Lancelot gained favor in King Arthur's court by persuading an enemy (Galehaut) to surrender rather than fight. I connect this to the oil-field deal that Chase did (p. 26) (presumably for Reis, since Sharon Bench knew his family and was unlikely to have an independent inside source). Chase worked for Reis in the end, and made a major contribution to his downfall through Cassie. This was also like Lancelot.

Dave Tallman — 23 Dec 2008, 23:42 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

That's true, and time-disjunction is addressed in the story. But then it is only addressed in the sense of ethermail, so one has to clear some brambles in order to qualify that theory.

Here is some additional evidence: there is a huge palace on Takanga Ha'i, "terrace after terrace... accented with palms" (247). How long would it take to build such a place with native labor? How long to sell enough gold to afford it, making only small quantities at a time? Fast-growing palm trees take ten years to reach a height of 25 feet. I suggest this palace is the work of a decade or more, longer than the president who appointed Reis' replacement has been in office.

Suppose by Woldercan time-warping Reis returned "early," while his counterpart was still in Woldercan. This would give him time to get his island kingdom and financial empire set up under aliases. At the scheduled time he could jump in a hopper and "return" from space as Ambassador Reis.

Sharon may have attempted to trace all this and gotten puzzled. Hence her apparently silly question to Cassie about the Reis/Rosenquist connection (237).

Dave Tallman — 24 Dec 2008, 00:30 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Yeah, but only while things were good. When push came to shove, Kanoa turned on him and got him killed.

I tend to see Kanoa as a spy for Cthulhu from the beginning. His phony, exaggerated British speech is meant to make people underestimate him (like Captain Bram Bert).

What things can we deduce about King Kanoa?

- 1) Cast spells against seasickness (239).
- 2) Hated his father, and was not sorry when he died (239).
- 3) Said he couldn't tell anything about the Storm King (239).
- 4) Grandfather was a wizard who caught the soul of Hanga (240).
- 5) His father placated Hanga with human sacrifices. "Bit peckish at times, but aren't we all." (241).

- 6) Tracked comings and goings of Reis carefully. "At times I wonder when he sleeps" (243).
- 7) Only lesser king with his own apartment in the palace (243). This access would help him conspire with the assassin.
- 8) Fought with and beat up on other men in his village (244).
- 9) Knew the Storm King feared depth charges (246).
- 10) Bribed by Reis (248).
- 11) His play counterpart is Tiny Penniman (249), who also played someone in "The Red Spot" who enlisted an assassin to kill Cassie's character (61).
- 12) A devout worshipper of the Storm King (283).
- 13) Used Cassie as a "puppet ruler" to kill Bill, just as the assassin wanted (284),
- 14) Advised her to marry someone familiar with the local situation. He meant himself (284).
- 15) Cassie says killing Kanoa was self-defense. "If I told you what he wanted me to do you'd think I was crazy, and he'd have killed me if I didn't do it" (299). Was it marriage she meant, or becoming a slave of the Storm King (as the assassin wanted her, instructed and tested 251)? Probably the latter, since Klauser wouldn't think the former was that crazy.