

Tree Is My Hat & AEG

The Urth list — 4 messages, 2 voices, 11 Sep 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5486>

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James Wynn — 11 Sep 2009, 15:34

Questions arising as I re-read AEG:

[page 13]

"On Earth, this guest was known as Gideon Chase"

What are his other names? And where is he known by them? He claims to the President to have not returned to Woldercon since he was a small child. He could be lying or he could be known by other names by the aliens of Takanga.

[page 14]

President says: "[Reis] was smart enough to see the big money went to them that had friends in high places. You want to bellyache about it? I have, more'n once. Don't do any good."

Strange statement coming from the President. Apparently, 'friends in high places' did not refer to politicians. The aliens of Takanga? I presume so. Aren't the true "evil guests"?

So what is the relationship between the US government and Hanga's people? The protagonist in 'The Tree Is My Hat' is a fellow who had recently had a nervous breakdown. He was chosen by the government to be assigned there and was told that he would be absolutely alone. He seems to have had few duties there. But, when he at last brought family, Hanga immediately tried to kill them all.

Was Bill Reis's goal to lead a world-wide coup against all the Earth governments in order to drive out the real powers of Earth: the Takanga aliens?

[page 15]

"I said if there was only one evil man in the whole world, it'd have to be Bill Reis. There's a hell of a lot of evil men in the world." "Three in particular" "We haven't gotten to that yet, John, an' I don't think we will."

This has been pointed out before, but I'll note that the "three evil men" relate directly to the issue of Bill Reis. They were an **issue** in the Bill Reis affair but the President chose not to address it.

J.

James Wynn — 14 Sep 2009, 17:04 · in reply to James Wynn

More questions:

Who is the "evil guest"?

Gideon Chase is referred to as "the guest" on the first page. He is even characterized in ways

that imply he is evil. At least the President thinks so.

[page 230] Cassie calls herself a guest on the island. She asks Hanga whether he is a guest at the island and he says "no".

[page 217] When Scott Zeitz's death by werewolf was reported in the newspaper, he is referred to as a "guest" at an unnamed hotel.

Any other references?

Wolfe has repeatedly referred to Bill Reis (and only Bill Reis to my knowledge) as a villain.

I'll bet the title "An Evil Guest" is a reference to ghost story writer J. Sheridan Le Fanu's "The Evil Guest". But I've never read the story. I've only read his "The Green Monkey". Does anyone else have any knowledge of this story or more extensive knowledge of Fanu?

J.

Mo Holkar / UKG — 14 Sep 2009, 21:30 · in reply to James Wynn

At 18:04 14/09/2009, James wrote:
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best,

Mo

James Wynn — 15 Sep 2009, 12:05 · in reply to Mo Holkar / UKG

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Yeah, but almost all Wolfe's novels have epigraphs. It's not typical for him to hang the entire title on one.

That still doesn't necessarily mean that the title means anything strongly related to the character and plot of the book. He has Lovecraftian aliens in a story centered around a Lovecraft town. Perhaps he said "I'll just stick on a title reminiscent of a story by another gothic horror writer. Who cares that this isn't gothic horror?" On the other hand, "The Tree Is My Hat" might qualify as gothic horror.

J.