

AEG: Bill's wives

The Urth list — 9 messages, 3 voices, 26 Sep 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5495>

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 — 26 Sep 2009, 17:29

Judging from Klauser's picture, Bill Reis had a wife but no children by her when he first went to Woldercan as ambassador. He was ambassador for eight years. In the year he met Cassie, he seems to have been back on Earth for something more than two years; call it three. Rian was then sixteen. That would make Rian about five when Bill became ambassador, eleven years earlier.

So, Rian's mother must have been Bill's first wife, and the wife he had when he went to Woldercan was his second. Judging from the picture comments about the South Seas he made when he was replaced as ambassador, he had no wife when he returned to Earth, or if he did he would soon be quit of her. Either way, there is a good chance that the second wife was wealthy Madame Pavlatos.

Though we know little of Pavlatos, I think what we do know matches up well with what we know about Cassie: both liked to sleep late, both were skinny when they met, both had once been great beauties, and neither liked for people around them to cry. There is a contradiction about Pavlatos: she arrived on a fancy yacht with an oversized stateroom, yet is described as austere. She was mistress of a billion dollars and comforted broken Cassie like a mother. Klauser wondered if broken Cassie was starlet Cassie's mother.

If Cassie went to Woldercan to find Bill, how could she have known that such a thing was even possible? Ethermails arriving out of sequence *suggest* that the flow of time is not always linear. Still, time travel is not demonstrated in the story, and Cassie is not all that bright. But she may have had proof of it. If Pavlatos is an older Cassie, Cassie may have recognized herself. Or, Pavlatos may have told her. Chance alone is not enough for Pavlatos to have been in the right place at the right time to rescue Cassie.

It may have unfolded this way: Cassie went to Woldercan as planned. She *had* to go there because of the ethermail she got from Gideon telling her it was okay to come. She had to send an ethermail telling him she was coming. To do otherwise would invite those problematic "complications". If unaccounted for ethermails can cause problems, trips into the past that have not yet been made would cause even bigger problems. So she went to Woldercan and Gideon used his magic to make her beautiful again, though probably not as beautiful as she had been. She hopped back to Earth and arrived before she left, after the birth of Rian but before Bill was appointed ambassador.

She met and married Bill, who would then have been about her own age, and went to Woldercan with him as his wife. Bill was a known womanizer, with a weakness for beautiful women. As her new-found beauty began to fade or the novelty wore off, he lost interest in her. They broke up, and he paid a steep price to be rid of her. That was the basis of the Pavlatos fortune.

Cassie went back to Earth and took the name Pavlatos. She knew exactly when, where and how

Bill would die, but there was nothing she could do about it. She knew exactly where to find Cassie, her younger self. She had to wait all those months for Cassie to be broken, otherwise she herself would not have existed as she was. In other words, she was stuck in a time loop.

Everything

must play out exactly as it *had* played out in her past.

It is not a "happily ever after" ending, but there was never going to be one. Cassie's beauty would have faded anyway, no matter what happened to Bill, and he was too self-centered and ego-bound to have stayed with a faded rose. Cassie was aware of Bill's fickle nature, having experienced it as his second wife. There may have been an element of vindictiveness in her passive role as Pavlatos, or at least resignation.

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 29 Sep 2009, 15:07 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Judging from Klauser's picture, Bill Reis had a wife but no children by her when he first went to Woldercan as ambassador. He was ambassador for eight years. In the year he met Cassie, he seems to have been back on Earth for something more than two years; call it three. Rian was then sixteen. That would make Rian about five when Bill became ambassador, eleven years earlier.

This theory keeps the best of the Cassie/Pavlatos connection without the extra complications of time-travel to get Rian's age right. I think it's good as far as it goes (I still want the Cassie/Margaret connection).

Does Pavlatos alone account for the reality-warping around Cassie (addresses, changes in what she remembers)? Or are there more time-travelers to worry about? Bill's travels in time are pretty well established (he couldn't have put together a play to trap her without more time). Is reality warping to keep things on track, the "If I don't send mine, his will have to be accounted for in some other way and it's liable to get complicated" of a universe that fights back against paradoxes?

Roy C. Lackey — 29 Sep 2009, 19:04 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman quoted and wrote:

Judging from Klauser's picture, Bill Reis had a wife but no children by her when he first went to Woldercan as ambassador. He was ambassador for eight years. In the year he met Cassie, he seems to have been back on Earth for something more than two years; call it three. Rian was then sixteen.

That

would make Rian about five when Bill became ambassador, eleven years earlier.

This theory keeps the best of the Cassie/Pavlatos connection without the extra complications of time-travel to get Rian's age right. I think it's good as far as it goes (I still want the Cassie/Margaret connection).

Whereas I was trying to avoid any Cassie/Margaret connection, for reasons previously given. <g> If Pavlatos is a future Cassie, she would be just about midway in age between Cassie and Margaret. If Margaret is also a future Cassie, she would have the memories of Pavlatos, and her

wealth. What happened to the money? Reis supposedly checked out Margaret's past, and so would the FBI after the kidnapping. It's hard to believe that she could have faked it convincingly.

It bothers me that Margaret was on the street near the bank when Cassie got back to Kingsport, and Cassie says she knows Margaret didn't recognize her. Why not? Why was Margaret even there? Without the diamonds, there would be no money to buy the hopper to get to Woldercan and the past. Any future Cassie would have the same retina scans that gave access to the diamonds.

Okay, Cassie/Margaret was an actress, so she could have faked the lack of recognition. But why be there at all? If she had been both Pavlatos and Cassie, she knew that she had failed twice to thwart Bill's death and Cassie's ordeal. And, if she had been Cassie/Pavlatos, then she had gotten Bill back, after a fashion, and nothing is forever.

Does Pavlatos alone account for the reality-warping around Cassie (addresses, changes in what she remembers)? Or are there more time-travelers to worry about? Bill's travels in time are pretty well established (he couldn't have put together a play to trap her without more time).

I agree that Bill needed more time than seems possible to have put together the play that is centered on Cassie. He had to have known about her long before the day he went to the cast party. Though indirect, this may be the best indicator of time travel in the story. So why give her the radioactive gold? One answer is that he didn't. That is, this leads back to previous theories of more than one version of him operating at the same time, the Wally vs. Bill bit and the seemingly pointless point of whether or not he was in the audience and what color dress she was wearing when he first saw her.

But this opens up another can of worms. If Bill is a time traveler, then he probably knows he will die on that island. In fact, it seems that he does know the circumstances of his death -- he gave a rather accurate foreshadowing of exactly what Cassie would see happen at her feet. He told her the night he gave her the diamonds (145-46). This gets hairy. If he is trying to change the past, so they can be happy together, he probably had no better luck than Cassie. And how did he get back to the past if he was dead? Cassie must be the answer. She went to Woldercan and into the past to find a living version of him. That version wrote the play.

And the mention of clones is a red herring.

Is reality warping to keep things on track, the "If I don't send mine, his will have to be accounted for in some other way and it's liable to get complicated" of a universe that fights back against paradoxes?

That may be all there is to it. Both Cassie and Bill try to change things for the better, but they find themselves stuck in an immutable time loop. That is, the big things can't be changed, just some minor details that don't affect the big picture.

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 30 Sep 2009, 14:00 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Whereas I was trying to avoid any Cassie/Margaret connection, for reasons previously given. <g> If Pavlatos is a future Cassie, she would be just about midway in age between Cassie and Margaret. If Margaret is also a future Cassie, she would have the memories of Pavlatos, and her wealth. What

happened to the money? Reis supposedly checked out Margaret's past, and so would the FBI after the kidnapping. It's hard to believe that she could have faked it convincingly.

Going back that far into the past probably required a long hopper trip, and fuel rods are expensive. She also may not have taken much wealth back with her.

It bothers me that Margaret was on the street near the bank when Cassie got back to Kingsport, and Cassie says she knows Margaret didn't recognize her. Why not? Why was Margaret even there? Without the diamonds, there would be no money to buy the hopper to get to Woldercan and the past. Any future Cassie would have the same retina scans that gave access to the diamonds.

Was it coincidence that Cassie ran into Margaret in the large city, or did Margaret know she would be there? Margaret may have wanted to see her younger self one more time. Margaret had no reason to clear out the diamonds before Cassie can get them. She wanted Cassie to have her experiences. I'm reminded of Margaret easily locating the bracelet in the hotel safe and knowing the combination when Cassie had forgotten she even used the safe. Perhaps she didn't forget -- it was Margaret who put them away for her. If so, Margaret could have taken them that night, and she refrained.

Okay, Cassie/Margaret was an actress, so she could have faked the lack of recognition. But why be there at all? If she had been both Pavlatos and Cassie, she knew that she had failed twice to thwart Bill's death and Cassie's ordeal. And, if she had been Cassie/Pavlatos, then she had gotten Bill back, after a fashion, and nothing is forever.

At the end, Margaret knows she's powerless to change the past except in minor ways. It might be she wanted to see her younger self one more time out of nostalgia. She didn't attempt to change anything -- she just looked and pretended not to recognize her.

I agree that Bill needed more time than seems possible to have put together the play that is centered on Cassie. He had to have known about her long before the day he went to the cast party. Though indirect, this may be the best indicator of time travel in the story. So why give her the radioactive gold? One answer is that he didn't. That is, this leads back to previous theories of more than one version of him operating at the same time, the Wally vs. Bill bit and the seemingly pointless point of whether or not he was in the audience and what color dress she was wearing when he first saw her.

The play seems to have been written with an evil motive toward Cassie. The very title suggests a woman who will be sacrificed, thrown into a volcano. Call this state of mind Killer Bill. I think it was Killer Bill who went back into the past as soon as he heard that Chase would be using Cassie. He wanted to buy himself some time to destroy her. From Chase's point of view, Killer Bill would have acted with frightening speed. perhaps frightening enough for Chase to join Bill's camp (p. 125).

Killer Bill had the bracelet made and worked with someone to write the play. He met with India and got tickets, but he didn't go see Cassie perform that night. After the play, he bribed Jimmy to take a gift to Cassie (the radioactive bracelet). If that had worked, he would have been able to plant the deadly gold on her with less of a back-trail to himself. Jimmy failed, so Killer Bill eliminated him as a witness.

He went to the party in person and gave Cassie the bracelet in a way she couldn't easily refuse. But now he had seen her face-to-face, and her star-power began to work on him. He soon began to regret his plans. He doubled back in time and watched the performance. Now he was really hooked, and went from Killer Bill to Wooing Wally. He got the bracelet back and asked Cassie

out. When he said he first saw her in green, he was telling the truth. The party, not the play, was where he first saw her.

None of this time-travel gives Bill any foreknowledge of his death. His description of an execution scene to Cassie was accurate (this is how they executed people on the island, with the "permission" of the Queen), but I don't think he knew at the time it would be applied to himself. This is just dramatic irony.

James Wynn — 30 Sep 2009, 15:01 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I do like the explanation of time-travel for Pavlatos-as-Cassie--because of the her opportune rescue and no other reason. However, Time travel does not explain why one of the Bill Rieses tried to kill Cassie with a poison bracelet.

Well, not exactly. It is just that it is difficult to combine that with Cassie having gone back in Time to marry Riese. You could say "Riese knew that his marriage to Cassie would lead to his death." But where does a Reise that wants to do that and knows about the upcoming marriage fit in to the Time-line?

Anyway, the marriage does not *cause* Riese's death. It was caused by his plan to set the US and the Island (refugee) Aliens against each other. So why not stop that? I still think the idea of a Woldercon imposters (maybe three of them) stands a good chance of fitting in here somewhere.

J.

Roy C. Lackey — 01 Oct 2009, 05:52 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman wrote:

[snip]

I'm reminded of Margaret easily locating the bracelet in the hotel safe and knowing the combination when Cassie had forgotten she even used the safe. Perhaps she didn't forget -- it was Margaret who put them away for her. If so, Margaret could have taken them that night, and she refrained.

There is an odd bit of dialogue in the breakfast scene the next morning, p-153, Margaret speaking first:

"You ought to get a thing at the bank, Miss Casey. A safety deposit."

"I will, only back home. Not here."

"That fits perfectly." Zelda nodded to herself. "Thank you, Margaret." "Fits what?" "In a minute. Here's the waitress, and you haven't even looked."

What was Zelda alluding to? She never brought it up again.

[snip]

None of this time-travel gives Bill any foreknowledge of his death. His description of an execution scene to Cassie was accurate (this is how they executed people on the island, with the "permission" of the Queen), but I don't think he knew at the time it would be applied to himself. This is just dramatic irony.

I think he did know that some version of him would die that death. The "seat of justice" where Cassie sat while Bill was killed was used by the "high king or high queen" to "announce to our assembled nation the justice of the Sky Gods" (282). So I don't think garden-variety executions were performed there.

James Wynn wrote:
[snip]

I still think the idea of a Woldercon imposters (maybe three of them) stands a good chance of fitting in here somewhere.

I would like for that to work, too. But the text doesn't give me enough to prove it, or even make a good case. I don't like to have to resort to messy time travel to unravel the plot of AEG, but we may be stuck with it.

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 01 Oct 2009, 06:44 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:
There is an odd bit of dialogue in the breakfast scene the next morning, p-153, Margaret speaking first:

"You ought to get a thing at the bank, Miss Casey. A safety deposit."
"I will, only back home. Not here."
"That fits perfectly." Zelda nodded to herself. "Thank you, Margaret."
"Fits what?"
"In a minute. Here's the waitress, and you haven't even looked."

What was Zelda alluding to? She never brought it up again.

Zelda owns a hopper. Could she also be some sort of time-traveler? It will fit Casey's need perfectly to have some valuables deposited that she can access in the future even after her mojo loss. Either that or Zelda is composing a haiku. "Safety deposit" has five syllables.

James Wynn — 01 Oct 2009, 18:12 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I would like for [the idea of a Woldercon imposters] to work, too.
But the text doesn't give me enough to
prove it, or even make a good case. I don't like to have to resort to
messy
time travel to unravel the plot of AEG, but we may be stuck with it.

Well, I want there to be an element of time-travel, because I want the time differential between Earth and Woldercan to factor in. But, realistically, there is **barely** more discussion of that than there is of cloning.

On the other hand, there is the hard and fast presence of Fairyland in AEG (banshees, gray neighbors, little voices in Chase's car) and associations of Woldercon with it. Fairyland also operates on a shifted clock from the mortal world. Time moves more slowly there (as with Aelfrice) and sometimes faster, which again could wreak havoc with time-lines.

For those steeped in fairy lore (and Wolfe seems to be), the concept of fairies switching places with mortals is practically fundamental (eg the Mabinogion and stories of "changelings"). David Lebling declared as early as September of last year that Chase was surely a Woldercanese. He didn't seem to consider it debatable, and let's face it, the text refers to him as "a guest" in the

first page. Ries is said to have been corrupted by his search for power. But Chase seems willing to be employed by ****anyone to do anything**** for money (gold). Like Phaedra, Sherry Gold, and Hyacinth, he's the consummate prostitute. He's surely the evil guest of the title (or one of them...it's hard to get around Wolfe's identification of Ries as a villain). Also, the text declares that Chase is known by other identities on the first page as well.

Secondly, I'm coming across analogies to "mirrors" and copies. Chase makes copies of photographs of Ries and then tears up the originals. Chase enters Cassie's apartment through an adjacent apartment that "mirrors" her own. And, then of course in the movie version of "Dr. Lao", the residents are duplicated in Woldercon. Granted, this could be explained by clones, but it is hard to wedge Chase in as a clone. He's a figure of fairyland...a wizard (IIRC in the old story of the child Merlin confronting Vortigern, Merlin is half demon).

Even Pavlatos's coincidental appearance at the island could be explained by

- 1) her association with Chase who would know where the Bat People would take Cassie if things went to hell
- 2) her being a Cassie-changeling and thus knowing where the Bat People took Cassie. In fact, Chase might be the sole reason they are stalking her. After all, he's in the employ of both the government and Ries, so what are the chances he is not hand-in-glove with these weird alien-fairies?)

What I'm saying is, that there is IMO at least as much textual opening to changelings as there is to time-travel or clones. And (I admit I'm looking in the street instead of the alley since there's more light there) it does not open the narrative to infinite speculative theories (merely an uncomfortably large number) of unmentioned trips back-and-forth to get to the "right" number of iterations (three) despite the US government being mysteriously unaware of the potential.

I'm increasingly troubled by the degree to which AEG/The Tree Is My Hat are novels set within an extensive lightly-referenced and expurgated super-plot. This is was a significant problem regarding Typhon and Blue's Neighbors, but it is exponentially frustrating in this new world.

J.

Dave Tallman — 02 Oct 2009, 04:06 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn writes:

In fact, Chase might be the sole reason they are stalking her. After all, he's in the employ of both the government and Ries, so what are the chances he is not hand-in-glove with these weird alien-fairies?)

Yes, I think it's well-established that the bat-people work with and/or for Chase.

- 1) One is present at Cassie's transformation. (p. 43, "Behind him: great, dark wings.")
- 2) One flies along with the hopper that contains Corby. (p. 156, "...something that might have been a monstrous bat.")
- 3) He warns her not to go outside late at night on p. 171. "...some things else. I don't want you to see them... Don't leave your windows open."
- 4) Reis tells her, (p. 191), "I'm trying to make them mine, if you want to put it that way. I'd like to, and I will." This directly parallels his efforts to get Chase to work for him. It seems to imply that if he gets Chase, he will get the bat-things.
- 5) There's the whole Batman/Robin thing going on between Chase and Cassie, especially the part about wanting to drive the "Batmobile."

Chase is a dark detective like Batman. Cassie is the bat's "cub" (p. 235).