

AEG: Mr. Pavlatos

The Urth list — 9 messages, 4 voices, 02 Oct 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5496>

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 — 02 Oct 2009, 04:12

My cynicism aside, who is there to say that Cassie didn't find her lost love and both lived together happily ever after? Whether Madame Pavlatos was Bill's second wife or not doesn't really matter; all that is important is that she has access to what has to be his wealth. There is nothing in the text to indicate that she was a lonely widow or jilted ex-wife, no real reason to suppose that she didn't have a man in her life.

If Cassie went back in time and found another version of Reis, she can keep him. It doesn't matter if the past cannot be changed in any significant way; all she/they have to do is move beyond the time loop. The time loop is bounded at one extreme by the farthest point in the past that either of them traveled. It is bounded on the other end by Cassie's rescue and journey to Woldercan.

Like this: Cassie goes into the past and finds a version of Reis. They get together and return to Earth. Both know what happened before and are unable or unwilling to change what happened. So they don't. Bill Reis is dead and his enemies will not be looking for him. He takes yet another identity, under which he manages his financial empire or uses Cassie (his common-law legal widow) as proxy.

All Cassie has to do is rescue herself at the right time, while Bill keeps out of sight. He has no need for more money, no reason to attract undue attention by illegal or questionable activities. Everything plays out just like it did in the story we have, but Cassie and Bill are free to live as they please after the book is closed, as Madame and Mr. Pavlatos, or whatever he wants to call himself.

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 03 Oct 2009, 04:56 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

If Cassie went back in time and found another version of Reis, she can keep him. It doesn't matter if the past cannot be changed in any significant way; all she/they have to do is move beyond the time loop. The time loop is bounded at one extreme by the farthest point in the past that either of them traveled. It is bounded on the other end by Cassie's rescue and journey to Woldercan.

I'm not sure what you mean by "another version" of Reis. If you mean a Woldercanian copy/doppelganger, this is subject to the same issue of lovable/unloveable copies. If this is a *temporal* clone of Bill, he will have to complete his own timeline by going back to die before he gets too old to carry off the impersonation.

Roy C. Lackey — 05 Oct 2009, 16:47 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman quoted and wrote:

If Cassie went back in time and found another version of Reis, she can keep him. It doesn't matter if the past cannot be changed in any significant way; all she/they have to do is move beyond the time loop. The time loop is bounded at one extreme by the farthest point in the past that either of them traveled. It is bounded on the other end by Cassie's rescue and journey to Woldercan.

I'm not sure what you mean by "another version" of Reis. If you mean a Woldercanian copy/doppelganger, this is subject to the same issue of lovable/unloveable copies. If this is a *temporal* clone of Bill, he will have to complete his own timeline by going back to die before he gets too old to carry off the impersonation.

Temporal. You seem to assume that time travel is one-way only, into the past. There is no more evidence for that than there is for travel into the future. If you receive a reply to an ethermail you haven't sent, you have had a message from the future.

-Roy

Dave Tallman — 06 Oct 2009, 17:17 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Temporal. You seem to assume that time travel is one-way only, into the past. There is no more evidence for that than there is for travel into the future. If you receive a reply to an ethermail you haven't sent, you have had a message from the future.

However he jumps, into the past or future, Bill Reis has only one personal timeline, and it ends when he is executed. Cassie may be able to steal more time to be with him this way, but if the past cannot be changed he must eventually return to die.

Roy C. Lackey — 07 Oct 2009, 07:11 · in reply to Dave Tallman

Dave Tallman quoted and wrote:

Temporal. You seem to assume that time travel is one-way only, into the past. There is no more evidence for that than there is for travel into the future. If you receive a reply to an ethermail you haven't sent, you have had a message from the future.

However he jumps, into the past or future, Bill Reis has only one personal timeline, and it ends when he is executed.

Does it? Perhaps, for the individual who was killed. But if there are characters who have one or more temporal copies running around at the same time, the copies cannot be simply walking in the footsteps of one who had gone before. That isn't possible. They would get in one another's way. Say there are two versions of Reis. Can Wally have lunch with Bill? There is no good answer.

Cassie may be able to steal more time to be with him this way, but if the past cannot be changed he must eventually return to die.

Take your theory that Margaret is an older Cassie: they interacted. Suppose that the sniper had shot and killed Cassie instead of Norma. Would Margaret have winked out of existence at that moment? Again, there is no right answer. Either way, there is a paradox. When it comes to having one's brains bashed in with a club, two heads are better than one -- I think.

Back to the ethermails. Cassie got an ethermail from Gideon welcoming her, and eventually acted on it (buying the hopper and so forth). Which came first, and from whose perspective? Suppose something similar happened with Bill. Suppose he received a communication from the future, from some point in the future after his death, that satisfied himself that events would play out in such a way that he would survive Bill's death on the island. It's a time loop again, if you will, only extended further into the future of the story we have. He can survive Bill's death because he wasn't there; he is a time-traveler copy.

The hypothetical communication from the future might have come from himself. He got to the future because of Cassie, who went to Woldercan to find him and did a little time traveling while she was about it.

All these time-traveling theories require too much supposing for my tastes, but that's the nature of the beast.

-Roy

Adam Thornton — 07 Oct 2009, 14:06 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On Oct 7, 2009, at 2:11 AM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:
When it comes to having one's brains
bashed in with a club, two heads are better than one -- I think.

Mister Typhon on lines three and seven for you.

Adam

Roy C. Lackey — 07 Oct 2009, 19:11 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Adam Thornton quoted and wrote:
When it comes to having one's brains
bashed in with a club, two heads are better than one -- I think.

Mister Typhon on lines three and seven for you.

I knew I was setting someone up for a straight-line; it was just a question of who. <g>

-Roy

James Wynn — 08 Oct 2009, 23:51 · in reply to Dave Tallman

What I know. What I know I don't know. What I think I might know. Perhaps this seems like basic stuff to everyone else, but I've had to reconsider what I thought to be the plot twice already.

On [page 260 -261] we learn that The Storm King has been on Earth for a million years or more. We know this because he has been around before humans (although this is the humans' planet) not his. In the interim, many other aliens have come to Earth. But they don't reveal themselves to humans. In fact, they impersonate humans to keep it all on the down low. Apparently, they do this by order of the Storm King. We are not told exactly why he commands this. [SUPPOSITION is to prevent humanity from being able to rise against him.] These aliens are not Woldercanlings. Woldercan is the only planet Earthlings have found with intelligent life. But they

are not the only intelligent beings that have found EARTH.

In addition, [page 262] there are humans --drawn from California pagans and Satanists-- who are directly allied to Storm King. Also, there are humans working with competing Federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Alcohol Tabacco and Firearms (ATF - Arthur Thomas Franklin).

It's not clear what the government knows or thinks it knows about Ries. The President thinks Ries is spying for Woldercan. John Ferguson (FBI Director) does not [p 18-19]. Presumably, he prefers to think Ries is spying for the Storm King. Of course the President might be lying; he tends to be more inclined to hold information back than John does. Reis is a man whose identity is apparently being assumed by at least two men simultaneously, but John implies there are three [p 15].

Copies and mirrors: Chase makes copies of Reis and tears up the original [p 21]. Chase enters Cassie's apartment through a hole in her wall from an apartment that "mirrors" her own [p 76]. When Cassie boards Pavlatos's boat, she is surrounded by mirrors and paintings of Madame Pavlatos [p 289].

What is the deal with the Volcano God play? I have no idea what its tactical purpose was. Just for Cassie? I'm not buying that. Why not get her into the movies (tri-vid) instead? The ATF went out of its way to assassinate one of the actors. How many cast members are not human; hiding out as "actors" just as Gideon Chase did? When Cassie meets the *real* Volcano God, he looks just like Vince Palma: the actor who played the Volcano God. Possible hint: After Cassie psychically merges with the modified human woman, Cassie says she "played" her once.

There are werewolves in this story, but it is not clear to me whether they are Wolderconlings or one of the other aliens. Just because Woldercan has perfected the ability to change, does not mean others have not succeeded in the same technology (remember Pat Gomez).

In addition, we have Gideon Chase who works for anyone. He supposedly left Woldercon as a child, but he knows a lot of Woldercon tricks, leading me to believe he is a changeling. He was able to heal the child of a rich woman (probably Pavlatos) of some indeterminate disease. Maybe he healed him, but maybe he just replaced him!

As the time-travel scenarios have become more and more nailed down, I like them less and less. I think clones are more likely but I don't think this is that sort of story. I think this is a spy novel where everyone is wearing a mask. But I'm not certain Wolfe has provided the clues to peer behind those masks. I once said that Wolfe would never be more than a "writer's writer" until he published a Silmarillion of the New Sun. Even more than those others, this novel feels only the first half of a novel. It's "Murder on the Orient Express" without the last chapters where Hercule Poirot puts the evidence together into the various possible scenarios. It's too bad, because I think this is a really cool world Wolfe has created and I'd like to know more about it.

J.

Roy C. Lackey — 09 Oct 2009, 05:05 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

There are werewolves in this story, but it is not clear to me whether they are Wolderconlings or one of the other aliens.

Neither. "Werewolves are human." (205)

Just because Woldercan has
perfected the ability to change, does not mean others have not succeeded

in
the same technology (remember Pat Gomez).

According to Gideon, Wolders "cannot transform as we [humans] do. Not at all." (99) What male Wolders can do is hybridize with lower animals. (100)

In addition, we have Gideon Chase who works for anyone. He supposedly left Woldercon as a child, but he knows a lot of Woldercon tricks, leading me to believe he is a changeling. He was able to heal the child of a rich woman (probably Pavlatos) of some indeterminate disease. Maybe he healed him, but maybe he just replaced him!

I don't know about Gid being a changeling, but it has been suggested before that he is not Bob Chase's biological son, that his real father was a Wolder. That might come to the same thing.

-Roy