

AEG again

The Urth list — 21 messages, 6 voices, 24 Nov 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5523>

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David Stockhoff — 24 Nov 2009, 13:42

Tomayto/tomahto.

OK, I just finished AEG.

Could someone please summarize all the discussion so far? I need to catch up. ;)

My first observation is that the novel is intended to be very stagy, i.e., like a play. As such it appears somewhat (deceptively) thin, and the characters even mock the plot's resemblance to what I imagine to be a series of Pacific island movies of the 1930s-40s, perhaps (having never seen one---maybe the musical "South Pacific" itself, which came a bit later?). The theme of "playing roles" is of course central, though I haven't thought about it much. And the play-like construction allows---nay, demands---lots and lots of off-stage action and resolution, which has always been a Wolfe signature anyway.

One is left wondering about the fate of R'Iyeh and the timing of the storm. Coincidence that Reis has stockpiled just enough radioactive gold there over the years so the Navy attacks just before he is to marry Cassie? Was it connected to the Navy in fact? And if the SK was indeed counterattacking the Navy with the storm, why did he turn off the storm in response to the sacrifice of Reis? How does that make sense? Does it matter?

I was also skeptical of Reis's confidence that the Navy could more than handle the SK. First, they would have to identify him as a threat. Then, they'd probably have to nuke him and pick up the gold after. This requires that he defeat them first, and we don't know the result of this battle.

Finally, I believe I've seen the furry bat aliens in some listing of all the races invented by Lovecraft. Are they byakhee?

Does anyone know this list? It's not on Wikipedia.

Message: 7

Date: Tue, 24 Nov 2009 01:56:46 -0600

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) The Guild's Revolutionary

Message-ID: <4B0B91BE.6030302 at io.com>

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

Adam Thornton wrote:

On Nov 23, 2009, at 5:30 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

It's less of a pun than a Dantean contrapasso, I would say.

Potato/dried tuber.

Adam

Goodness, is it my turn in the barrel again already?

I'm not sure what you mean by that answer, could you please explain it at greater length, Adam?

-- Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com IEEE Student Chapter Blog at <
<http://ieeetamut.org> > -----

Adam Thornton — 24 Nov 2009, 14:16 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On Nov 24, 2009, at 7:42 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

I was also skeptical of Reis's confidence that the Navy could more than handle the SK. First, they would have to identify him as a threat. Then, they'd probably have to nuke him and pick up the gold after. This requires that he defeat them first, and we don't know the result of this battle.

Maybe this is how the gold got radioactive in the first place. It's another time loop!

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Nightgaunts, I believe. Although these seem to do a bit more than clutch and fly and tickle.

Adam

James Wynn — 24 Nov 2009, 15:35 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I was also skeptical of Reis's confidence that the Navy could more than handle the SK. First, they would have to identify him as a threat.

From the strange story _The Tree Is My Hat_ we know the US government (now a

E.U.-style member of the World Government) is well aware of the Storm King. They sent the protagonist there as a kind of ambassador.

J.

David Stockhoff — 24 Nov 2009, 19:36 · follows James Wynn

Yes, that seems likely.

See <http://members.shaw.ca/csstrowbridge/Tulzscha/Information.htm>

Message: 3

Date: Tue, 24 Nov 2009 08:16:42 -0600

From: Adam Thornton <adam at io.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) AEG again

Message-ID: <2EAD4F55-7F38-4ED4-9870-FB73AD90FED3 at io.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

On Nov 24, 2009, at 7:42 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

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Adam

Charles Tallman — 25 Nov 2009, 01:20 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

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Some I've participated in recently are speculations about other roles Cassie may have played:

- 1) Margaret may be Cassie, come from the future. Initials M.B. are significant.
- 2) Margaret is possibly a werewolf.
- 3) Margaret may be the shooter of Chase.
- 4) India White is another possible werewolf. (A black-and-white name, for one thing.)
- 5) Madame Pavlatos may be Cassie, come from the future. Is is coincidence that Cassie was rescued?
- 6) Cassie may also be Reis' first or second wife, via time-travel. She may be the mother of Rian.
- 7) There are probably multiple time-traveling copies of Reis around.
- 8) Reality shifts around Cassie (addresses, etc.) because of her star-power or because of time-traveler interference.

One is left wondering about the fate of R'lyeh and the timing of the storm.

Coincidence that Reis has stockpiled just enough radioactive gold there over the years so the Navy attacks just before he is to marry Cassie? Was it connected to the Navy in fact? And if the SK was indeed counterattacking the Navy with the storm, why did he turn off the storm in response to the sacrifice of Reis? How does that make sense? Does it matter?

Reis placed the gold there to lure the Navy into attacking; he wanted to do something to the SK in revenge for the attack on Cassie. He would know how much to plant to make that happen. The storm did not "turn off" in response to the sacrifice. The sacrifice was in vain and many more died. It only seemed to die down to Cassie when the bat-men carried her away, riding with the wind.

David Stockhoff — 25 Nov 2009, 13:25 · follows Charles Tallman

I will have to read that again. I think I didn't know the Storm King was Cthulhu then ...

Message: 4

Date: Tue, 24 Nov 2009 09:35:40 -0600

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv at gmail.com>

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) AEG again
Message-ID: <5DF5BDD58A5D4E94A20848089B816FF5 at eMachinePC>
Content-Type: text/plain; format=flowed; charset="iso-8859-1";
reply-type=response

I was also skeptical of Reis's confidence that the Navy could more than handle the SK. First, they would have to identify him as a threat.

From the strange story _The Tree Is My Hat_ we know the US government (now a E.U.-style member of the World Government) is well aware of the Storm King. They sent the protagonist there as a kind of ambassador.

J.

James Wynn — 25 Nov 2009, 14:58 · in reply to Charles Tallman

5) Madame Pavlatos may be Cassie, come from the future.

I now think this is absolutely true, and it is quite likely that Sharon knew it. Sharon says that the boy Chase healed was "a little piece of the man [his mother] loved and lost." I think this is the meaning of Wolfe's statement that "Cassie loved Bill Reis and at the end of the novel she goes to Woldercon to look for him." But of course where she gets him and how she Time travels is totally left in the air.

Yeah, Nightgaunts. And one is involved in Cassie's transformation.

J.

David Stockhoff — 25 Nov 2009, 23:08 · follows James Wynn

Of course you're right about the storm. That's much better.

The only necessary time travel I see so far is that Cassie will use the hopper to Woldercan to return to an earlier time to meet Reis and bear his son and introduce Reis to Chase (whether she reveals herself to Chase at that point or not). This explains all that, and is supported by Cassie's comment to the effect that you often need to act to avoid paradox---by sending an email to justify a previous response, in that case. She may in fact suspect that she has already succeeded.

So that would make this another novel that ends in the characters achieving a kind of transcendence. No doubt Reis has already used this trick many times. Would Pavlatos then be a remarried future-past Cassie? I am uncertain how marriage to a (deceased) time-traveler works, and therefore how remarriage would work, especially from a legal perspective. ;)

To be honest, I'm skeptical of going much farther---I think there's enough going on in the novel without resorting to that. However, in reading up on the Lovecraft mythos, I found a reference to a universe where time runs oddly; the description sounds similar in vagueness to Wolfe's, and the phrase "it is almost impossible for two beings to have a shared sense of time" caught my eye:

Chronosphere

* Dimesion mentioned in A Matter of Time

* Chronosphere was just the name used by the author, the name used by the inhabitants is unknown.

* From the description of the inhabitants found in the book, one could surmise that they are Dimensional Shambler
<<http://members.shaw.ca/csstrowbridge/Tulzscha/Information.htm#DimensionalShambler>>.

* According to Professor Kairos

<<http://members.shaw.ca/csstrowbridge/Tulzscha/Cults.htm#ProfKairos>>,
time moves slower the larger the scale. The smaller the object, the faster it moves through time. Also, the farther apart two objects are, the slower time moves for them.

* Because of this, it is almost impossible for two beings to have a shared sense of time.

* Traveling through this dimension is very disorienting and the time it takes to do so is from an outside perspective is impossible to judge in advance. If a traveller spends what felt like 3 months in this dimension, him might return home to find centuries have passed, or it could be just a few seconds, or he could have even return /before/ he had left.

Message: 3

Date: Wed, 25 Nov 2009 08:58:25 -0600

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv@gmail.com>

David Stockhoff — 25 Nov 2009, 23:12 · follows David Stockhoff

Thanks!

Who else was MB? Has anyone cross-checked initials with those of Lovecraft characters living in Kingsport?

There's a conversation with Chase where it almost seems as though Wolfe is hinting that Cassie is a werewolf. But little of what Chase said about werewolves made sense to me, so I can't analyze it.

What are the reality shifts involving addresses? I'll have to look that up ...

Message: 1

Date: Tue, 24 Nov 2009 18:20:09 -0700

From: Charles Tallman <rocketsunner@gmail.com>

To: urth@lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) AEG again

Message-ID:

<1bf4dd40911241720m5cf03e4fl8c8ada288dc966d8@mail.gmail.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

David Stockhoff wrote:

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Dave Tallman — 28 Nov 2009, 06:07 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

Who else was MB? Has anyone cross-checked initials with those of Lovecraft characters living in Kingsport?

My thought was Margaret Briggs/ Mariah Brownlea. The latter is Cassie's role in the Volcano God play, so this suggests Margaret is also a role played by Cassie. Every other initial coincidence is significant.

What are the reality shifts involving addresses? I'll have to look that up ...

Look for old messages with the title "Cassie's Mobile Home."

David Stockhoff — 30 Nov 2009, 12:58 · follows Dave Tallman

Thanks!

Again, a precedent is available, so I'll buy that, even if Margaret being a later Cassie isn't necessarily pivotal to the plot. In *Free Live Free*, four people resembling the Oz crew achieve master of time and their own fates. Here, one or two people take that one step further and play

supporting roles in their own dramas. Like Severian, they get to relive their lives. Makes perfect Wolfean sense.

Message: 1
Date: Fri, 27 Nov 2009 23:07:50 -0700
From: Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com>
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) AEG again
Message-ID: <1bf4dd40911272207y93e894w2753430eaa6af152 at mail.gmail.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

David Stockhoff wrote:

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Look for old messages with the title "Cassie's Mobile Home."

James Wynn — 30 Nov 2009, 14:17 · in reply to Charles Tallman

3) Margaret may be the shooter of Chase.

Although Margaret might be involved in the assault on Chase and there is a good chance that she is working for Reis (she arrived late at Cassie's apartment after the attack), I find it hard to believe she could be the assassin. The text refers to the assassin as a "he" and that person took a meat cleaver to the face.

We're all agreed that it was Reis in the alley who wanted to give Cassie a present right? Jimmy said he couldn't really see the person, which suggests it was someone invisible. Which means that Reis murdered Jimmy by stopping his heart. But why *kill* Jimmy?

J.

brunians at brunians.org — 02 Dec 2009, 18:37 · in reply to James Wynn

Is there a problem with Jimmy being the assassin, and a liar?

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J.

James Wynn — 03 Dec 2009, 13:17 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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Is there a problem with Jimmy being the assassin, and a liar?

Well, everyone says he's dead before the cast party at the beginning of the book. And he did seem scared when he delivered the message to Cassie.

J.

Dave Tallman — 07 Dec 2009, 23:52 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Brunians wrote:

Is there a problem with Jimmy being the assassin, and a liar?

Unless there is time-travel involved, yes. He was dead before the assassination attempt on Chase.

A better candidate is Donny Duke. Here are some clues.

- 1) He played a murderer in the Mars play.
- 2) He is associated by initials with Diana Diamond, the SG cult's assassin.
- 3) He is a small man, not the same physical type as the heavyset John.
- 4) He drinks green, slimy drinks (like the green, slimy spittle of Diamond).
- 5) Diamond said one of their number saw her dance a hornpipe with flower pasties on her breasts. Donny Duke was her dance partner.

The case would be that Duke was an SG follower who tried to kill Chase because he was close to Cassie, as they killed Brian Pickens. He appears without a scarred face after the attack, but the cultists might have their own means of magical regeneration.

David Stockhoff — 08 Dec 2009, 23:48 · follows Dave Tallman

The fact that no one shows up with a horrible facial scar, when one was so clearly indicated, does suggest that Something is Up. Either it's a red herring or ...

We could speculate as to who might be able to heal from such a wound, knowing that any such explanation/identification demands that we know the assassin. If we don't know the assassin, we don't need to know he healed. So either he was a nobody who means nothing (hah!) or he was someone we do know who healed, and whom we (or Cassie) would have recognized if he had not. Otherwise, there's no point to the clue.

Who would have the ability to recover from such a wound?

- 1) An unknown government or other agent with access to advanced medicine
- 2) Someone who is a doctor and is from Woldercan
- 3) Someone working for Bill, who has unpredictable powers
- 4) Someone with access to time travel (who could heal with time travel a la the Conciliator, if one accepts that)
- 5) Someone who works for a god with unknown but verifiable powers
- 6) Someone who never received a wound in the first place

#1, #2, and #3 are not much help. The government has no claim to advanced biology the way Woldercan does, and an unknown agent would not be of interest anyway. We don't know of any Woldercanian agents on Earth, right? Chase, the only doctor we know from Woldercan, is not known for his time traveling, so would not have had an opportunity to attack himself, let alone a motive. Bill said he was wooing Chase for a long time, though Chase thought he was behind the attack, so Bill as the assassin or the assassin's boss seems unlikely, especially given what Chase did for him/Cassie/his son.

#4 and #6 are just guesses. Maybe Bill could have healed the assassin or healed himself with time travel, but that doesn't tell us who the assassin is or give us a motive for Bill. Margaret (or any other apparently normal human) could only have done it if she meets any one of the requirements in a way that is unknown to us; for example, if she is Cassie she could have used time travel (IF that even works). I have no explanation for #6, but you can never trust Wolfe. The logic laid out above still applies in this case---the clue is pointless if we don't know who WOULD have been wounded by the cleaver. Similarly, unless werewolves are described as having healing powers, it wasn't a werewolf.

#5 points to Cthulhu, whose powers in support of his worshipers are vaguely but evocatively described and have direct effects on the bodies of same.

So by this logic either the assassin was sent and healed by unknown Woldercanians with their medicine (since we have many pointers to that advanced skill) or he was sent and healed by the cultists with their magic as part of their war with Bill---but as they are homicidal loonies who work for Cthulhu, it's not critical that their actions make perfect sense. Or do they know that Bill and Chase will be/were friends, and believe that Chase is a way to Bill?

Incidentally, is it possible that Bill simply caused Jimmy to have a heart attack out of fright? He seemed a candidate for heart trouble and was plainly and justifiably afraid. It wouldn't be the first time a Wolfe character said "Yes, I killed" someone who died accidentally as a result of someone the character did. Bill does say he has killed people, but he doesn't say who or how. Jimmy may have been one such person. Bill wouldn't need a motive, just a means and opportunity.

Message: 1

Date: Mon, 07 Dec 2009 16:52:11 -0700

From: Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com>

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) AEG again

Message-ID: <4B1D952B.8060508 at gmail.com>

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

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Dave Tallman — 09 Dec 2009, 13:47 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

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Werewolves don't have to be described in-story as having healing powers for us to assume them. In many werewolf movies they heal rapidly from any wound not made by a silver weapon or bullet (this is directly referenced when Cassie gets a gun with silver bullets after learning that werewolves are real). In-story, Chase says that werewolves rearrange their cells. That could easily be used to cure or hide a wound.

So either of the werewolf candidates we know of (Margaret Briggs or Ebony White) would be possible candidates. I tend to favor Margaret (time-traveling Cassie, trying to fix Cassie's life by killing Chase), but Ebony has the advantage of possibly being male in disguise (she lives with India). She is thin (size four, never gets fat p. 59) even though she eats lots of meat. The motive for trying to kill Chase could be that she is working for Reis. Ebony White is an unusual name, invoking both the black and white of werewolves as well as hints of Snow White, with all its disguises and violence.

David Stockhoff — 09 Dec 2009, 22:21 · follows Dave Tallman

Touche.

Hmm.

The waters just get deeper.

Message: 2
Date: Wed, 09 Dec 2009 06:47:50 -0700
From: Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com>
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) AEG again
Message-ID: <4B1FAA86.4000701 at gmail.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

David Stockhoff wrote:

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Dave Tallman — 16 Dec 2009, 23:41 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:
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Hmm.

The waters just get deeper.

More on Ebony White. This happens to be the name of a young sidekick of "The Spirit" (somewhat notorious as black stereotype). In a world where Lamont Cranston is real, can this possibly be a coincidence? It makes it all the more likely that Ebony is not what she seems. It seems more likely that this is a man in disguise, and (if also a werewolf) a good candidate for the shooter of Chase.

brunians at brunians.org — 17 Dec 2009, 01:58 · in reply to Dave Tallman

When is the last time that Ebony is seen in the story?

David Stockhoff wrote:

Touche.

Hmm.

The waters just get deeper.

More on Ebony White. This happens to be the name of a young sidekick of "The Spirit" (somewhat notorious as black stereotype). In a world where Lamont Cranston is real, can this possibly be a coincidence? It makes it all the more likely that Ebony is not what she seems. It seems more likely that this is a man in disguise, and (if also a werewolf) a good candidate for the shooter of Chase.

Dave Tallman — 17 Dec 2009, 04:05 · follows brunians at brunians.org

brunians wrote:

When is the last time that Ebony is seen in the story?

Interestingly, it is the werewolf scene with Scott Zeitz. Ebony instantly realizes it's a wolf and not a dog ("OhMyGod!....A woman tried to pet it." p. 190). The last real communication from her is an article clipping describing the death of Zeitz ("VISITOR KILLED BY DOGS" p. 217; note the plural).

Cassie thinks more of Ebony as a friend after this. She considers inviting her to her room instead of Chase (p. 210) or else Donny Duke (p. 215), both of which ideas get a strong negative reaction from Chase. She later talks about inviting India and Ebony to her wedding (p. 276), but not Margaret, whom she seems to have gone off completely (maybe because she suspects something odd about Margaret by this time). The wedding invitation mention is the last until the credits at the end.