

Seven American Nights procession

The Urth list — 8 messages, 3 voices, 17 Aug 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5720>

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Dave Tallman — 17 Aug 2010, 13:34

I had a question about the day of the week of the final day described in "Seven American Nights." The main clue is an outdoor procession Nadan supposedly witnessed on that day:

A very old man -- I suppose a priest -- carried a cross on a long pole, using it as a staff, and almost as a crutch. A much younger one, fat and sweating, walked backwards before him swinging a smoking censor. Two robed boys carrying large candles proceeded them, and they were followed by more robed children, singing, who fought with nudges and pinches when they felt the fat man was not watching them.

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...the entire procession, from the flickering candles in clear sunshine, to the dead leader lifted up, to his inattentive, bickering followers behind -- seemed to me to incarnate the philosophy and the dilemma of these people... I realized that its ritualized plea for life renewed was more foreign to them than to me.

Borksi says this is a stations of the cross procession for Good Friday. Others think it was an Easter Sunday procession. I'm not sure, and I'm not familiar enough with Catholic ritual to tell the difference. It matters for the symbolism of the story.

We also have the statement by Ardis, "Tomorrow night the theater will be closed for Easter, and you can take me to a party." She said that the day before the procession. It's barely possible the theater would be closed for Good Friday and she would still say the same thing, but the fallen America doesn't seem that religious.

David Stockhoff — 18 Aug 2010, 12:21 · in reply to Dave Tallman

A theater could be closed "for Easter" on a Saturday. That would make it a Good Friday procession. And Saturdays are party nights.

Dave Tallman wrote:

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Dave Tallman — 18 Aug 2010, 13:53 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

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You can't have a Good Friday parade on Holy Saturday, I don't think. The party was on the evening of the day he saw the procession. (It's my theory, however, that nothing described on the last day is real. I think it was all forged by the American secret police, who wanted Nadan to disappear.)

Case for Good Friday:

Singing was plaintive? "ritual pleas for renewal of life."

A crucifix rather than an empty cross? "the dead leader lifted up"

Case against it:

Not done at night (but that might be too dangerous).

Odd theater closing day.

Case for Holy Saturday:

Good party day.

Case against it:

I've never heard of Holy Saturday processions.

Case for Easter Sunday:

Good party day (though maybe not for costume parties).

Processions of this sort are done around the world on Easter Sunday.

David Stockhoff — 18 Aug 2010, 23:01 · in reply to Dave Tallman

I thought you said the party was to be "tomorrow" night. I haven't looked it up, but if that's the case, then today is the procession and tomorrow is Saturday. A theater would be closed all that weekend if Sunday is Easter.

If it's Saturday, none of it makes sense.

If it's Sunday, the theater would be closed Monday night anyway, so it makes no sense.

Dave Tallman wrote:

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Dave Tallman — 19 Aug 2010, 04:05 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

I thought you said the party was to be "tomorrow" night. I haven't looked it up, but if that's the case, then today is the procession and tomorrow is Saturday. A theater would be closed all that weekend if Sunday is Easter.

I'm sorry I wasn't clear about the context. Let's call them Day N and Day N+1.

On Day N, Nadan sees his last performance of "Mary Rose" (actually he performs in it himself). Afterwards he goes home with Ardis and has sex with her. As he is leaving for his hotel, she tells him, "You will see me tomorrow. You're going to take me boating and we'll picnic by the water. Tomorrow night the theater will be closed for Easter, and you can take me to a party."

Nadan returns to his hotel that night and finds his room disturbed, an egg taken, and his journal moved. He strips certain pages out of the journal and... (I say the police return and arrest him and he is seen no more).

On Day N+1, the journal continues the story. Nadan and Ardis walk up the shore from his hotel near the Arena Theater to the Jefferson Memorial (this is impossible, if you check a Washington map). They do all the picnic and boating things exactly as she described. On the walk back to the hotel, they see the procession. That night they attend a costume party (both in disguises that would easily conceal their identities if impersonators did it in their place). They go back to Ardis' place and Nadan lights some arrack in order to see her naked. He supposedly sees she is a werewolf monster, perhaps the very one he shot at before, so he kills her.

So the options are:

N = Thursday, N+1 = Friday

Symbolically this is great. Nadan gets arrested on Thursday night, like Jesus. The story has parallel to a passion play, with Ardis as Judas. I like this a lot, except for the theater being closed on Friday for Easter.

N = Friday, N+1 = Saturday

Maybe this isn't so bad. Like you say, the theater could be closed the whole weekend for Easter. There may be processions that would normally be held Friday night or very early on Easter morning that were moved to Saturday mid-day for safety. Nobody wants to be out at night with werewolves around.

N = Saturday, N+1 = Sunday

This has the theater open on Saturday but closed on Easter Sunday, and a procession late in the day for Easter itself. Again, a mid-day hour might be selected for safety. The symbolic revelation of a negative Easter (either an Ardis monster or an American plot) is reasonable.

James Wynn — 19 Aug 2010, 17:47 · in reply to Dave Tallman

On 8/18/2010 11:05 PM, Dave Tallman wrote:

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Thematically, this also makes sense because after the procession, the text says: "It is very late-three, my watch says." Three o'clock is the hour of Christ's death.

Additionally, the procession with the priest carrying the cross "like a crutch" is surely Good Friday.

When Ardis said "Tomorrow night the theater will be closed early for Easter." It is not unreasonable that she meant Easter weekend. And if the city has a large enough Catholic population to allow for public Good Friday processions, then it is not unreasonable that the theater to be closed IN THE EVENING on that day.

u+16b9

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 19 Aug 2010, 18:59 · in reply to James Wynn

Ah, closed EARLY for Easter. Of course.

I was going to check the text before I said anything, but James is right--- everything depends on how Catholic are the customs of the city. In Philadelphia, for example, everything shuts down on

Easter weekend, starting Friday afternoon if not morning.

This custom may seem strange to those who did not grow up with it.

--- On Thu, 8/19/10, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) Seven American Nights procession
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Thursday, August 19, 2010, 1:47 PM

On 8/18/2010 11:05 PM, Dave Tallman wrote:

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-----Inline Attachment Follows-----

Dave Tallman — 20 Aug 2010, 01:40 · follows DAVID STOCKHOFF

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closed IN THE EVENING on that day.

I don't see the word "early" in the text, but that's still fine. I don't think the theater does matinees, anyway. I'm convinced that Good Friday is the intended day, and thanks for finding yet another Passion reference. The more I look for them in this story, the more I find.