

Suzanne's secret

The Urth list — 4 messages, 3 voices, 13 Jul 1997

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Alice Turner — 13 Jul 1997, 09:13

OK, mantis, I'll bite. What is Suzanne's secret origin? (I'm guessing it's a link to another story.)

OTOH, how many people have discovered the secret origin of "Suzanne Delage," a quiet little story in ENDANGERED SPECIES? I mean: I figured something out (largely by accident, as per usual) and asked a lot of people if they'd spotted anything intratextual (it really is a needle in a haystack) and then (when none of them had seen it) told them what I'd found.

-alga-

m.driussi — 13 Jul 1997, 20:14 · follows Alice Turner

Reply: Item #8155535 from URTN at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET#

alga,

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

She spoke to me of myself, my family, my social background. She said: "Oh, I know your parents know some very nice people. You're a friend of Robert Forestier and Suzanne Delage." For a moment these names conveyed absolutely nothing to me. But suddenly I remembered that I had indeed played as a child in the Champs-Élysées with Robert Forestier, whom I had never seen since. As for Suzanne Delage, she was the great-niece of Mme Blandais, and I had once been due to go to a dancing lesson, and even to take a small part in a play at her parents' house. But the fear of getting a fit of giggles and a nose-bleed had at the last moment prevented me, so that I had never set eyes on her. I had at the most a vague idea that I had once heard that the Swanns' feather-hatted governess had at one time been with the Delages, but perhaps it was only a sister of this governess, or a friend. I protested to Albertine that Robert Forestier and Suzanne Delage occupied a very small place in my life. "That may be; but your mothers are friends, I can place you by that. I often pass Suzanne Delage in the Avenue de Messine. I admire her style." Our mothers were acquainted only in the imagination of Mme Bontemps, who having heard that I had at one time played with Robert Forestier, to whom, it appeared, I used to recite poetry, had concluded from that that we were bound by family ties. She could never, I gathered, hear my mother's name mentioned without observing: "Oh yes, she belongs to the Delage-Forestier set," giving my parents a good mark which they had done nothing to deserve.

[Oh, now who could =that= be? <g>]

[Proust, THE GUERMANTES WAY, Chapter Two, p. 381-382]

=mantis=

P.S. There is, of course, more to this story. For example, what was the book the narrator was

reading that set him off on his mental journeying? It =might= be Proust, it certainly =reads= like Proust, but if it is Proust it didn't jump out at me, even after I'd found our girl SD in Proust (and that =is= her only Proustian appearance). Otherwise the story seems like another PEACE satellite tale (I don't believe the town is ever named, but the tenor is the same).

=m=

P.S.S. What if I'm making all this up? <g>

=m=

Jim Jordan — 15 Jul 1997, 08:23 · follows m.driussi

Yeh, lotsa Proust in Wolfe.

I guess my question is: Is there a fantasy element in "Suzanne Delage," and if so, where is it? The story feels like *Peace,* so it is probably a ghost story, but how so? Anybody know?

Anybody up for discussing "The Changeling"? I've read it about ten times over the years, and it still puzzles me. I'll give it one more try and then post my questions, if anyone wants to join in.

Nutria

m.driussi — 15 Jul 1997, 14:00 · follows Jim Jordan

Reply: Item #0156759 from URTH at LISTS.BEST.COM@INTERNET#

Nutria,

The PEACE/Proust aspect of "Suzanne Delage" is probably the fact that the narrator is sitting/lying in the old house he's lived in all his life, casting his mind about in nostalgia and detective work.

The "fantasy" element that occurs to me is the Wolfe favorite of reincarnation--Suzanne's daughter looks exactly like Suzanne did at that age. This isn't fantasy in the hands of most authors, or in our everyday minds when we use such analogies, yet Apu Punchau = funeral bronze = ("second") Severian . . .

Which does tie in nicely with the Peter Pan/communist, identity hijacker/history erasures complex of "The Changeling." Which, in its own turn, links to "A Cabin on the Coast" with fairy deals . . .

=mantis=