

W°NDER CITY ST°RIES

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ALL MY DEMON SPIRITS

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OF ALL MY DEMON SPIRITS

Normally, I have a professional ethic against looking up any information I accidentally glean from telepathic contact with anyone. I don't want to violate their privacy more than I've already done. I don't want to become curious for more information, because even that subconscious urge might be enough to allow me to walk into their minds again in search of more tidbits. I do my best to forget it.

After waking up from incredibly intense and vivid dreams for a week, though, I got online and looked up just who the flaming hell this "Bernie" was I was, as Jane, sleeping with.

Some poking around found me this entry on Parapedia:

Bernadette Andruzzi

Code Name: Spare Change

Born: June 14, 1923 in Philadelphia, PA

Died: April 10, 1965 in Wonder City, PA

Para ability: Shapechanging

Bernadette ("Bernie") Andruzzi was a Class 7 shapechanger, capable of exactly reproducing another human being's form, down to details such as the fingerprints and retinal patterns. It is unknown as to whether she also replicated the powers of paranormals she changes into—there are no records of her using powers other than her own Class 2 superstrength and Class 3 invulnerability.

Her shapechanging ability was originally rated by the U.S. Army as Class 3 [this cited her declassified enlistment record]; it is unknown how her abilities were enhanced.

History

Very little is known about Andruzzi's private life. She was born to a large family in Philadelphia, the second generation of the family born in the United States. Andruzzi rarely discussed her parents or

siblings. (Searches of ParaDB.gov find two other people with her surname, neither identified with a similar paranormal ability, and no indication of relationship.) She enlisted in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in May 1942.

Her service throughout World War 2 is still classified, but biographers have gleaned enough information to determine that she mostly served as a spy in fascist Italy, passing information to Allied forces. After the war, she remained on the Gold Stars roster until her death.

Death

In 1964, the Gold Stars announced that Andruzzzi was being placed on indefinite medical leave. In a rare interview with Andruzzzi in late 1964, she stated that she had inoperable pancreatic cancer and expressed frustration that her paranormal abilities were extending her life in a way that was "nearly intolerable." She died at the home of her longtime friend Jane Liberty on April 10, 1965.

Personal Life

Andruzzzi never married, nor was she ever romantically linked with any of her colleagues. She occasionally appeared at Gold Stars events with a nonparanormal celebrity companion. In the 1964 interview, she stated that her friends in the Gold Stars were her family and she had never had a need for romance in her life. Her closest friends were Jane Liberty and Betsy Starr. Andruzzzi and Liberty both attended Starr's college and law school graduations, and Andruzzzi appeared at the baptism of Starr's daughter Florence (of the team known as Ebb and Flo) as her godmother in March 1965.

There were very few pictures with the article: one of her during the War with Jane and Betsy, one of her appearing at the Hollywood premiere of "The Three Musketeers" in 1948 as Vincent Price's date, and one of her in a Gold Stars lineup in 1960. She looked a lot like Jane, actually, though she was taller and more statuesque to Jane's shorter and chunkier look.

I shut the windows and sat back, staring at the screensaver. I knew why I'd been having the dreams. Given my own history, with its dearth of consensual sexual experiences, one of the things my subconscious seeks out—and which I try desperately to guard against—is other people's experiences to fill the gap. Unfortunately, when I'm distracted and can't guard against my subconscious, I'll pick up way too much information. And that whole situation was one giant distraction. I expected that in addition to the Jane stuff, I probably had too much information about Brainchild's pansexual adventures stuffed away somewhere in my head.

A tiny corner of my mind was paranoid that Jane may've been consciously thinking about some of those things in order to leave some sort of legacy, or explanation, or something, after her death. I had known Jane for many years, and I knew that she had a manipulative streak in her. I suppose some of that comes from having to lie for so long to both the government and the public at large. She just got in the habit of lying to everyone, making all her own plans, and carrying them out without asking for permission.

I wondered if she'd enhanced Bernie's powers without asking, or if Bernie had asked, or if the government had ordered Jane to do it.

I resigned myself to a few more months of these dreams and occasional flashbacks while conscious, because my mind was going to continue to chew on these stolen memories, will I or nil I. And I would rather have obsessive thoughts about some people who were dead than end up having to talk to a living person, like Nereid, whose sex life I probably knew way too much about anyway, while thinking naked thoughts about her.

Floribunda came thundering in at that moment and bounded into my lap, which, of course, knocked the wind out of me and spun the chair around with both of us in it. She had that crazy, wild-eyed look of a dog who just decided that it is the Time of Scampering and after one full rotation of the chair, she leaped off and galloped out, butt slightly tucked under and ears swept back in full-speed mode. When I could breathe again, I started laughing and couldn't stop until I staggered out of the room to strip off and throw myself into the swimming pool. I think she's glad to be home too.