

The Make-Up Room

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A Mike Lundy Cross-Time Novel

ORINDA, CALIFORNIA

2014

THE MAKE-UP ROOM

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PROLOGUE

There exists an irrefutable truth: the fabric of history has been stained with events—some accidental, some senseless, some planned—that have caused great grief or brutal devastation or both. And because time marches relentlessly and unsympathetically into the future, these incidents pass—sometimes with resistance, retaliation, or regret—but all eventually end up as lamentable memories—or simply historical accounts in a textbook.

What was, *is*.

Or is it?

Unknown to most of us, there exists a ‘gateway’ that briefly opens between two different calendar years when their days and dates match, allowing an opportunity for some ill-fated individuals from the past to stroll innocently into the future. If they are fortunate, they will connect with someone. Someone who might be able to alter their destiny—and those tragic events surrounding them.

*Someone like Mike Lundy.*¹

What was, *is?*

Not in The Make-up Room. It’s August of 1941. A beautiful starlet, unaware she is about to die as a result of sabotage, accidentally wanders from the famous Max Factor Studio into

¹ Read of Mike’s previous cross-time adventure in *The Vanity* where he finds himself in 1927, attempting to save a doomed Louise Brooks.

Mel's Drive-in, where she finds our hero, Mike Lundy. The year? 2014! Mike, realizing her fate, must decide whether to save the young actress—and attempt to prevent the other tragedies spinning around her—or let things stand, do nothing, trusting that the existing history August be the better one if left alone.

I'm often asked, "Is Mike the *only* one who can 'cross-time?'"
"Well, except for the women who wander into his life from the past, absolutely!" I lie. I really do not know.

What I do know is that Mike is not particularly comfortable—or excited—about being designated "The Cross-Time Traveler."

Mike's conundrum is much like Newton's cradle—that desktop toy with the swinging spheres. He knows that whatever he does that impacts the past, it will propagate straight through to the future.

— Robert S Murillo



There's an old saying about "Being in the right place at the right time." The adage obviously champions the idea that something good, something of value, something even exciting can occur serendipitously by being in a certain place at a particular time. I'm sure it has happened to you. But recently, for me, that old maxim has needed a re-write. Try "Being in the right place at a different time."

– Mike Lundy

INTRODUCTION

*Somewhere off the coast of Los Angeles,
Twenty-five meters below the surface of the ocean,
Thursday August 8th 1941*

Someone brought Captain Shasaki Nujita a cup of tea. He smelled the hot brew and was pleased. Confident, complacent—proud to a fault—Nujita stood in the Control Room, overseeing the dozen or so skilled officers monitoring the operations of his B1 Type I-19 aircraft carrier submarine. The B1s were fast, had a long range, and—in front of the conning tower—carried a loaded single seaplane that could be literally catapulted into action. Captain Nujita savored his sophisticated sub as much as he savored his tea. He took a swallow of the pungent drink and smiled. His dark eyes revealed a smugness that comes when the hunter has his prey in his sights.

To his right was his second in command and long time comrade, Shoji Izu. “Shoji, the Americans are an arrogant people. Reports from our informants indicate their leaders believe no one would dare attack their precious mainland. Their strategies remain inadequate, coastal patrols are lax.” Nujita’s lips curled up in a smirk. “By early tomorrow morning, two more B1s, the I-23 near Monterey and the I-15 off San Francisco, will rendezvous with us just off the coast of Long

Beach. Together, at exactly 1030 hours, we shall unleash a deadly attack on the Douglas Aircraft Assembly Plant.”

CHAPTER ONE

Mel's Drive-in Dinner, 10:35 am, Tuesday August 5th 2014

Darren checked his Tag Heuer. "Gotta jam, Mike. People to see, a magazine to market, money to make." He dabbed his mouth with his napkin and tossed it on his plate. "Text me if you need me." He slid out of the booth where we had just finished a late breakfast at Mel's Drive-in—a retro restaurant with the ambiance of the fifties and sixties. Darren gave me a high five, and immediately pointed at me and said, "You're the man!"

I countered with "You're the man, Darren. Congrats again to you!"

"Thanks, Mike. Give me a week to get back to you with the details. Want you to meet my replacement. Seeya soon." Somehow he had—once again—slipped the bill off the table without my seeing and strutted toward the cashier.

Darren Chin. Good friend and a fan of my writing. He also was the current chief editor of Warner Bros.'s *The Westwood*, a fine literary magazine published as the West Coast's answer to the *New Yorker*. And now he was moving up to a new position: Vice President of Warner Bros. Publishing Group.

Good call by Warner.

An unlovely, bored, middle-aged waitress greeted Darren at the register. He flashed a friendly face, nodded in my direction, handed her some money, said something, and immediately she

lit up like a Christmas tree. Showing a surprisingly sweet smile now, she said something back. He laughed and, then, turned and walked away. She watched him until he exited out the front door with a look that said, “*Please* take me with you.”

Darren. The man had it all.

I needed to jump also but decided to stay a few more minutes to finish my coffee, and poke at the remains of my Mel’s Special—a three-egger Huevos Rancheros with Mexican rice and refried beans. The place was fairly empty. There was an older couple—each wearing an *Oakland A’s* jacket—sitting at the counter. Near the back, a small squad of servers dressed in white shirts and matching garrison caps were chatting in Spanish. The waitress who had worked the cash register was now making coffee while a rather large and well-tattooed short-order cook, through slitted eyes, was watching the waitress.

This particular Mel’s Drive-in—opened in 2003—inhabited the annex that was attached to the famous four-story Max Factor Building²--which is now the permanent home of the Hollywood Museum. Located on North Highland, just off Hollywood Boulevard, the complex is less than a block from where the Academy Awards are held.

Anyway, by now, the eggs were cold and the coffee colder. Time for me to get my day started. But, as I began to slide out of the booth, I noticed a pretty young woman standing by the

² See photo of Hollywood Museum and Mel’s Drive-in in the Prologue.

door that connects Mel's with the museum. She was scrutinizing the restaurant as if she had just fallen from the sky. When she looked my way, I gave her one of my best smiles. She seemed surprised. She checked behind her, as if to see if it were meant for her. Then turned back to me. Then, realizing I was leaving, she raised her hand and waved.

"Wait!"

CHAPTER TWO

Mel's Drive-in Diner, Tuesday August 5th 2014

Back in 1935, Max Factor purchased the building and opened his Max Factor Make-up Studio. It was here that Max 'beautified' most of Hollywood's loveliest stars during the 30's, 40's, and 50's. A few of the "stars" that passed through his "factory" included such notables as Rita Hayworth, Judy Garland, Jean Harlow, Bette Davis, Lucille Ball, Claudette Colbert, Betty Grable, and Marilyn Monroe.

Quite a group. And that's the short list.

The folks at the Hollywood Museum have done a wonderful job faithfully restoring the first floor to what it was when Hollywood's studios paraded those glamorous stars through the marble lobby—and into one of the four make-up rooms in the back. Each one of those rooms was unique, specializing in the different hair colors: brunettes, brownettes, and redheads. And, of course, blondes. Based on a star's hair color, a perfect make-up would be created and applied. And—voila!—the look that we grew to know and love was created. Lucille Ball actually became a redhead at Max's. And Marilyn wasn't a blonde until she showed up at the Factor studio door.

But there was much more to the Hollywood Museum than the four make-up rooms and a swanky marble lobby. The upper floors of the building, once used to manufacture and store the famed Max Factor cosmetic products, now were home

to the greatest accumulation of movie and TV memorabilia in the world.

For any moviephile, The Hollywood Museum was the Smithsonian of filmdom

CHAPTER THREE

Max's Studio, 10:29 am, Tuesday August 5th 1941

Veronica Lake and Linda Darnell sat near the bottom of the stairs that led up to the side exit of the famed Max Factor Studio, having a smoke. Veronica took one last, deep drag on her *Lucky Strike*, dropped it near her foot, and rubbed it out with the toe of her shoe.

“We got to get back.”

Linda nodded, flicked her cigarette in the general direction of the Signal gasoline station across the way and immediately began rummaging through her handbag for a mirror.

“Hang on.”

Veronica, too, reached for her purse where she hoped to find her lipstick.

Veronica and Linda, sent to Max Factor's for make-up sessions by their respective employers, Paramount and 20th Century-Fox, were opposites in appearance. Veronica, dubbed 'Ronni' by her friend, was short with long, thick blonde hair and blue eyes while the taller Linda – 'Lin' to her friends – had hair raven-black – equally as bountiful – and dark brown eyes. The girls had made only a handful of films between them yet were considered two of the “hotter commodities” among Hollywood's current pool of young actresses. Linda already had a few successful movies to her credit. And Veronica? She

had just finished her first 'starring' role. Incredibly, their ages *totaled* a mere thirty-five years!

"Hang on, Lin," Veronica said, removing a brassy tube from her purse. "Left half my lipstick on the cigarette." But as she pulled the lipstick out, it caught on the shoulder strap, slipped from her fingers, bounced off the lower step, and speedily rolled in the direction of the gas station.

"Damn it!"

She jumped up and took out after the fleeing cosmetic, catching up with it a few steps from the staircase.

"Got you, you little rascal!"

She squatted down to pick it up, and, as she did, she noticed it had rolled onto a different surface, where the ground was no longer asphalt but a black and white checkered vinyl.

"What the..."

Slowly rising, she looked around and saw that a restaurant now occupied the space where the service station had been.

"Holy mackerel! *Lin!*"

Veronica quickly turned around, saw the outline of a door that was no more than a haze. She could not see Linda sitting on the staircase, checking her make-up in a small mirror. Still she called to her.

"Lin! *Linda*, where are you?"

Linda snapped her make-up case shut, popped up and looked around for her friend. There was nothing before her but the gas station.

“Ronni? Ronni! Where’d you go?”