

FLF: the four and who/what they are

The Urth list — 4 messages, 3 voices, 11 Dec 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3661>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Michael Andre-Driussi — 11 Dec 2002, 01:46

Catharine Margaret Garth, aka Candy, is the massive (250+ pound) pale prostitute who wears white (a virginal color) which is sometimes (e.g., as she is singing at the bar in the Consort hotel) mistaken for blue (blue and white being the colors of Mary, mother of Jesus, iirc). To escape from Belmont, the mental hospital, she has to put on the uniform of a black nurse (note the contrast); after which, since people assume she is a nurse, she begins to act like one, and becomes a healer.

The witch in black (opposite to Candy's white), known as Madame Serpentina and Marie, uses her own strip-show seduction to manipulate Ozzie Barnes early on in the novel, but despite all that she seems to be a virgin (the gypsy Pete says that King would kill her if she had a non-gypsy boyfriend, if I read the passage right, and this seems like a real threat rather than an exaggeration). She is also dark skinned, as the black nurse points out.

Osgood Myles Barnes. (Why do three of the four have hidden names beginning with "M"? I heard that question 16 years ago and now I ask it myself. Does it have to do with the fact that "M" is at the middle of the alphabet?) He talks about being Popeye, but it isn't until after Phil Reeder, the crazy drunken sailor changes clothes with him at Belmont (and loses the glass eye) that he really becomes Popeye, complete with towering Olive Oyl (Robin Valor), Sweet Pea (Little Ozzie), and Bluto (Phil Reeder). In addition to this, he is the magician Oz and a satyr.

James Stubb. Ozzie says his original name, "Stubbe," means "room." Which does not ring any bells for me, unless it points to "Free as the House/Country of Oz" thread.

Three of the characters have something about their eyes. Three of the characters have Freudian fixations which are psychological explanations of their vices/character imbalances (Candy's gluttony; Ozzy's lust; Stubb's inability to feel).

EYES FIXATION OZ CHARACTER

Candy na Oral Dorothy?

Witch contact lenses na Ozma?

Ozzy glass eye Genital Wizard Oz

Stubb glasses Anal Tin Woodman?

I wonder if Candy is "normal girl of Earth" Dorothy to the Witch's Ozma "sorcerer-princess of Oz"? I make the tentative link between Stubb and Tin Woodman mainly because I think Stubb's "hard boiled" persona shows his inability to feel (the Tin man's problem) as well as the slighter details: Stubb vaguely suggests to me something cut (like the stump of a felled tree); Stubb is the one who retrieves the axe after the accident in front of Free's house.

=City of Oz under seige=

To fend off the demolition, each of the four does what he/she can. The witch summons up a chthonic entity that stops the police from going around the house to the back door (unless this

is done by Free himself?), and so confuses them that they break into the neighbor's house (Mrs. Baker's). Candy throws water, which first chases the cops away and then freezes on the porch, turning it into a slippery trap; later she slicks herself up with baby oil to inhibit their attempts to remove her from the house. Stubb tries calling all the politicians he knows, and this brings the tv news. Barnes is the one who calls in all the business men who mob Sergeant Proudly, including: Mick Malloy (ex-cop, life insurance salesman); Steve Marshal (life insurance); Nate Glasser with P, E, G & D (investment counselors); and Sim Sheppard (Florida real estate).

Nathanial Glasser is the one who wears blue-tinted spectacles (naturally). This seems to be a clear pointer to the Emerald City of Oz, where everyone wears green spectacles. More specifically, it suggests the first man who is seen wearing these curious glasses: the Guardian of the Gates of Oz. And Nate Glasser is, in fact, a guardian of the portal of Free's house (pointing to "Free as the House/City of Oz").

In the first Oz book, the Army of Oz is a single soldier (wearing green spectacles). In the second book, iirc, Oz is overrun by an invading army, a coalition of militants from each of the four member-states of Oz, and after the Ozma restoration a more modern army of many generals and one private is established in Oz.

The fact that of the 100 or so businessmen there are four named suggests comparison to the coalition army, and the fact that the Florida real estate salesman has to wear beachcomber attire in winter shows that he represents "the South," much as the coalition army is made up of members from North, South, East, and West, with the differences marked by a bit of color in their uniforms.

The fire axe which is used against the door of the house and later beans Sergeant Proudly in the head, while it looks to be a normal axe, in the landscape of Oz it can only belong to one figure: Nick Chopper, the Tin Woodman. (Not that Officer Williams, who was using the axe, is to be associated with the Oz hero: as noted above, I begin to wonder if Jim Stubb is a version of Nick Chopper.)

So in FLF, the Oz elements emerge in such a way as to reinforce the notion that Free's house is the land of Oz, or at least the Emerald City: only this time the beseigers (cops and wrecking crew) are set upon by a coalition army from four points of the compass (whereas in the second Oz book the coalition army is laying seige to the city).

Again, I'm not an expert on Oz or Freud, so I stand by ready for corrections on matters relating to either one or anything else.

=mantis=

Roy C. Lackey — 11 Dec 2002, 06:46 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

mantis wrote:

Catharine Margaret Garth, aka Candy, is the massive (250+ pound) pale prostitute who wears white (a virginal color) which is sometimes (e.g., as she is singing at the bar in the Consort hotel) mistaken for blue (blue and white being the colors of Mary, mother of Jesus, iirc). To escape from Belmont, the mental hospital, she has to put on the uniform of a black nurse (note the contrast); after which, since people assume she is a nurse, she begins to act like one, and becomes a healer.

I can't address the OZ stuff, so just a few notations. Pink is often mentioned in connection with Candy, especially her hands. She was wearing a garish pink robe in the morning before she took Free to breakfast. She changed into a pink sweater and black skirt. Her open-toed sandals were

also pink. FWIW.

I wonder if Candy is "normal girl of Earth" Dorothy to the Witch's Ozma "sorcerer-princess of Oz"? I make the tentative link between Stubb and Tin Woodman mainly because I think Stubb's "hard boiled" persona shows his inability to feel (the Tin man's problem) as well as the slighter details: Stubb vaguely suggests to me something cut (like the stump of a felled tree); Stubb is the one who retrieves the axe after the accident in front of Free's house.

I took his name to be related to his height. As in stubby. The "hard boiled" persona is straight out of old books/movies. IIRC, at one point Stubb even recalls one such movie role played by Robert Mitchum. I don't see Stubb as hard boiled; he just doesn't wear his emotions on his sleeve. He is often sympathetic to people, especially Candy.

As for assigning OZ roles: there is one point, near the end of chapter 14, when Candy and Barnes are together in the hotel lobby, before they have ever gone up to Serpentina's room. She had just spoken to Stubb on the house phone. She said ****to**** Barnes: "Seventh floor, room seventy-seven, Ozzie. We're off to see the wizard." So how can Barnes be the wizard? Only the witch and Stubb were up in the room.

-Roy

Michael Andre-Driussi — 11 Dec 2002, 17:28 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy wrote:

I can't address the OZ stuff, so just a few notations. Pink is often mentioned in connection with Candy, especially her hands. She was wearing a garish pink robe in the morning before she took Free to breakfast. She changed into a pink sweater and black skirt. Her open-toed sandals were also pink. FWIW.

Good points. I took the pinkness of her fingers as pointers to her pale skin color. Her pink and black clothes were worn, iirc, when she was "off duty." In any event, I believe there are strong connections between Candy and the color white, just as there are links between the witch and black.

Re Stubb, Roy wrote:

I took his name to be related to his height. As in stubby.

Sure, that's there. I didn't mean to exclude it.

The "hard boiled"

persona is straight out of old books/movies. IIRC, at one point Stubb even recalls one such movie role played by Robert Mitchum.

Odd thing about that movie: I couldn't find it using the very useful Internet Movie Database. Sure, Robert Mitchum shows up, but there is no movie listed with him and "Linda Loring," in fact, iirc, there is no listing for a "Linda Loring" at all.

From the notes in FLF, one might think that "Hellcats of the Navy" is about Naval pilots. It is about a submarine.

I will agree that my accuracy was off in writing that Stubb has an inability to feel: after all, I previously wrote that he was choleric! To ammend it, I would say that Stubb wants to have a "heart," that is, he should have feelings of a more positive, sanguinary nature; and this wanting to have a heart is a tenuous link to the Tin Man (who wants to have all feelings).

As for assigning OZ roles: there is one point, near the end of chapter 14, when Candy and Barnes are together in the hotel lobby, before they have ever

gone up to Serpentina's room. She had just spoken to Stubb on the house phone. She said **to** Barnes: "Seventh floor, room seventy-seven, Ozzie. We're off to see the wizard." So how can Barnes be the wizard? Only the witch and Stubb were up in the room.

There are several references to the movies (including that one reference to "The Wiz"). In the case you cite, I think the points are: the witch is a magic user; they are going to see her. (If the musical had contained a song about visiting Glinda, a trip which happens in the book, iirc, maybe they would have used that song.) The same song is used again, when they have escaped from Belmont, Little Ozzie sings it to the group (Little Ozzie, Big Ozzie, Nimo, Stubb, and Candy) and I don't think they are really going to see a wizard at that point, at all. (But I do wonder at how this group might map to Dorothy and her four companions, because Nimo seems to paint himself as the Scarecrow with his parody of the Scarecrow's song "If I Only Had a Brain."

Dorothy: Candy

Scarecrow: Nimo the Clown

Tin Man: ?

Cowardly Lion:

Toto: ?)

As for Ozzie being the Wizard Oz (aside from the name, which is as obvious as stub = short). In the land of Oz there are two clear classes of magic: there is real magic (practiced by the witches, Ozma, and others) and there is stage magic, i.e., fakery (practiced by Wizard Oz). While Ozzie's novelties for sale are mainly pornographic items or toy puzzles, he does have some of those "practical joke" tricks, like the sneezing powder that goes off when Proudly grabs him (which causes him to sneeze and contributes to the accident with the axe: the axe-ident). This use of simple dime-store trickery is very much like Wizard Oz in DOROTHY AND THE WIZARD IN OZ.

Re Ozma and Dorothy, I should point out the details of their hair: Ozma's hair is, I believe, dark and long (down her back); Dorothy's hair, contrary to the movie, is blonde and shoulder-length (true, it is in long braids for the first book, but once Ozma is introduced [book 2], Dorothy's hair is as I reported above, afaik). A nice physical match for the crowning glories of the witch and Candy.

A word about Sgt. Proudly: he is villainous not because he serves the eviction notice but because he is a corrupt cop -- he bullies money out of Candy and hits her. There seems to be more corruption in the 13th Precinct: that other cop is getting money out of Barney the loan shark.

=mantis=

William Ansley — 15 Dec 2002, 06:49 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

At 5:46 PM -0800 12/10/02, Michael Andre-Driussi wrote:

In the first Oz book, the Army of Oz is a single soldier (wearing green spectacles). In the second book, iirc, Oz is overrun by an invading army, a coalition of militants from each of the four member-states of Oz, and after the Ozma restoration a more modern army of many generals and one private is established in Oz.

The fact that of the 100 or so businessmen there are four named suggests comparison to the coalition army, and the fact that the Florida real estate

salesman has to wear beachcomber attire in winter shows that he represents "the South," much as the coalition army is made up of members from North, South, East, and West, with the differences marked by a bit of color in their uniforms.

It is rather late to respond to your message, mantis, but here goes anyway.

As I have said many times before, I have always found the Oz parallels in FLF to be rather superficial. Sure there are some references to the movie, but I have found all attempts to draw deeper parallels to be strained at best. Especially since Wolfe demonstrated just how thoroughly he could incorporate Oz lore in one of his stories in "The Eyeflash Miracles."

Anyway, you are thinking of General Jinjur's Army of Revolt ("We are revolting!" "You don't look it.") in The Marvelous Land of Oz by L. Frank Baum. In this book the Emerald City is conquered by an army of girls (that is, young women). They are assured of victory because, as Jinjur says, "What man would oppose a girl, or dare to harm her? And there is not an ugly face in my entire Army." And, just in case, they all have sharp knitting needles thrust in their hair, which they use to great effect as weapons.

These girls are from all four parts of the land of Oz, but Baum mentions this mainly, it seems, as an excuse to describe their costumes in great detail. They wear green blouses and skirts that are one quarter blue, yellow, red and purple. They also have four buttons on their blouse of the same colors. The color of the front section of the skirt and of the topmost button indicate which part of Oz the wearer comes from.

(Baum may have been satirizing the women's suffrage movement; it is hard to be sure.)

I don't think my information contradicts your theory, but it may weaken it, since the most important characteristic of the Army of Revolt was that it was made up of girls, not that it was a coalition from all "four corners" of the land of Oz.

William Ansley

--