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Studies in Short Fiction

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Satyrs and Serial Killers Have A Lot More in Common than you'd Think

Fairies, a Celtic mythological creature, that Disney has spun into majestic, pretty, fun creatures all seven-year-olds are inspired to be, are yet another victim of deception and propaganda. Fairies are not majestic and kind in Celtic mythology, the same way Satyr's are raging man-whores with nothing better to do than rape and assault random women throughout Greece, stalking and praying on them, then attacking when their guard is down. In the same way serial killers are known for their specific gruesome methods or their common victims. The short story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" written by Joyce Carol Oates, is a thriller piece that is centered around a beautiful teenage girl Connie, and an event that changes her life, or depending on the interpretation, ends it. Oates leaves the reader to analyze the texts, on their tiptoes wondering what happened to Connie, and who the mysterious and presumably dangerous man, Arnold Friend, really is. Through analytical articles "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by Joan Easterly and "A Source For 'Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?'" by Tom Quirk, allow the reader to venture into different, but plausible theories behind who Arnold Friend is, and what happened to Connie.

Author Joan Asterley argues that Arnold Friend, the main antagonist of the story, is an allusion to the Greek mythological creatures Satyrs, who were known to rape, assault, and abuse random women throughout Greece, especially if they were beautiful like Connie. Along with being dirty and disgusting, Satyrs are drunk, and in Oates's short story, Arnold's friend acts as if

he is too. In every telling of a Satyr's drunk attacks, sometimes it is specified what happens to the women afterward, while other times, and in Connie's case, it is not. As well as with Tom Quirk and his serial killer theory. There are plenty of serial killers in modern-day society who have gotten away with horrendous murders, commonly toward women, and have never been named. Notoriously, what is thought to be the, if not one of, the first serial killers in history, Jack the Ripper, whose identity to this day remains unsolved, and the details of his victims are commonly theorized, but due to the time, there was not much that could have been done, as technology was nothing like it is today. Oates admitted in an interview that she did take inspiration from certain serial killers when writing the character, Arnold Friend.

Although there are plenty of other theories as to who or what Arnold Friend may be, yet nothing is more outrageous and laughable than Bob Dylan and the "Musical Messiah". Musician Bob Dylan is admittedly from Oates herself, a huge inspiration for her story and his song "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue", which is referenced in the piece. However, writers Mike Tierce and John Michael Crafton, take his involvement to a new level with their belief that Arnold Friend is Bob Dylan, a musical Messiah who has come to save Connie. Other than references from Oates about her inspiration of Bob Dylan and his music, the theory falls flat-out ridiculous. In the story, three numbers are written on the side of Arnold Friend's car, which are a biblical allusion to Judges 19:17, which's last line alludes to the first part of Oates's title, but nothing about a musical Messiah.

At first glance, Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" is confusing, and to some, unclear. However, the symbolic story allows the readers to decide for themselves what they think happened, as well as connect with other readers to share theories

about who Arnold Friend was, what he did to Connie, and what happened to her at the end of the story.